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ABSTRACT

As part of a study of programs offering alternative educational choices in public school systems, the Rand Corporation assessed teacher reactions to programs in four districts: Alum Rock (California); Eugene (Oregon); Minneapolis (Minnesota); and Cincinnati (Ohio). It was found that teachers tend to evaluate a program on the basis of its advantages and disadvantages to students, parents, and the teachers themselves. While teachers generally favored parental choice, they were skeptical about parents' capacity to choose effectively as well as about the degree of impact alternative programs could have on students. Teachers were reluctant to assume the added managerial duties associated with alternative programs. Teachers responded positively to working in buildings housing only one program at a time, to effective district leadership, and to having a voice in program control and the admission of students. The four districts sampled are compared and relationships between teacher response patterns and district policies are drawn in this report, which concludes with three recommendations: districts should more effectively inform the public about alternative programs; district plans should balance the needs of consumers, teachers, and the school organization; and the maintenance of financial equity among programs should be stressed. (Author/PGD)

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ED216425

A STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION, VOL. III: TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO ALTERNATIVES

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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ROGER RASMUSSEN

R-2170/3-NIE
JULY 1981

Rand
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10.00

PREFACE

This report is one of a series documenting a study of alternative schools in American education, sponsored by the National Institute of Education under Contract B2C-5326. There are six other volumes in the series, all published or forthcoming under the general title, *A Study of Alternatives in American Education:*

Vol. I: *District Policies and the Implementation of Change*, by G. V. Bass, R-2170/1-NIE.

Vol. II: *The Role of the Principal*, by M. A. Thomas, R-2170/2-NIE.

Vol. IV: *Family Choice in Schooling*, by R. G. Bridge and J. Blackman, R-2170/4-NIE.

Vol. V: *Diversity in the Classroom*, by P. Barker, T. Bikson, and J. Kimbrough, R-2170/5-NIE.

Vol. VI: *Student Outcomes at Alum Rock, 1973-1976*, by F. J. Capell, with the assistance of L. Doscher, R-2170/6-NIE.

Vol. VII: *Summary and Policy Implications*, by the Educational and Human Resources Program, R-2170/7-NIE.

This study had its origins in 1972. In April of that year, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) funded an education voucher demonstration in Alum Rock, California, and awarded a study and evaluation contract to The Rand Corporation. Voucher systems require that funds for education be distributed directly to families in the form of certificates, which families can then use to purchase education at schools of their choice.[1] The government wished to test a voucher model that included competing public and private schools, with complex regulations designed to protect and advance the interests of disadvantaged families.[2] But the OEO agreement with Alum Rock did not require immediate implementation of this model. In lieu of private schools participating in the demonstration, Alum Rock was to encourage parent choice and stimulate competition between schools--two key objectives of the voucher plan--by creating multiple programs within the public schools. Parents would be informed about their options and encouraged to select the programs they preferred for their children. Alum Rock and OEO agreed that this "public schools only" model was to be a "transition" toward a more complete voucher demonstration, and OEO continued to seek additional demonstration sites for a more extensive test of the voucher idea. The demonstration began in September 1972 with six schools, organized as twenty-two "mini-schools" offering a variety of educational approaches.

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[1] Findings for the first year of the voucher demonstration (1972-73) are reported in Daniel Weiler et al., *A Public School Voucher Demonstration: The First Year at Alum Rock*, The Rand Corporation, R-1495-NIE, June 1974, 4 vols. Alum Rock is an independent elementary school district in San Jose, California.

By the end of the second year of the demonstration--Spring 1974--sponsorship of the voucher program had been assumed by the National Institute of Education. The transition to a full-scale model in Alum Rock had not taken place, and no new sites had joined the demonstration. Rand and NIE agreed, however, that while a more complete voucher test might still be arranged in Alum Rock or elsewhere, the existing demonstration was of interest in its own right: Thirteen public schools were offering forty-five program options to parents.[3] In effect, Alum Rock was testing a variant of an innovation that a number of observers had argued could improve the quality of public education--alternative schools.

It was agreed that while the main study would continue to concentrate on Alum Rock in 1974-75, a small side study would be undertaken to explore the nature of the alternative schools movement in other districts. This study identified a number of areas where further analysis might yield a better understanding of the issues associated with implementing alternative schools. Many of these issues had already surfaced in Alum Rock.

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[2] The "regulated compensatory" voucher model was originally proposed in a 1970 study commissioned by OEO. See Center for the Study of Public Policy, *Education Vouchers: A Report on Financing Elementary Education by Grants to Parents*, Cambridge, Mass., December 1970.

[3] There were at one time more than fifty mini-schools available to participating parents, in fourteen demonstration schools. Ten Alum Rock schools never joined the demonstration.

By the fourth year of the demonstration (1975-76), prospects for creating a more comprehensive test of the voucher model had diminished appreciably, while the work that had already been accomplished in Alum Rock constituted a useful base for a modest comparative study of alternative schools. Accordingly, some project resources were shifted in that year toward the study of three new sites where alternative schools were being tried: Cincinnati, Ohio; Eugene, Oregon; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.[4] Data collection from these sites and Alum Rock was completed in 1976-77.

This report examines teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward alternative schools, including parental choice, program diversity and quality, admission policies, and participatory decisionmaking. In short, the report (1) identifies those features of alternatives that are most significant to teachers, (2) clarifies possible relations between district policies governing alternatives and teachers' responses to those alternatives, and (3) makes recommendations based on those districts' experiences that might assist others in deciding to implement educational alternatives.

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[4] Criteria and methods for site selection are discussed in Chapter I of Vol. I in this series: *District Policies and the Implementation of Change*, by G. V. Bass.

SUMMARY

Recognizing that there is no definitive method for educating all children, many school districts have experimented with policies and programs that offer educational alternatives. Some of these experiments have produced successful, ongoing programs; many have not. Teachers' perceptions of alternatives and attitudes toward them are among the strongest determinants of a program's viability. In light of this fact, communities considering alternative programs need to know how district policies and strategies influence those perceptions and attitudes. This report addresses that question and offers recommendations that may help policymakers and administrators implement educational alternatives.

As part of a larger Rand Corporation study of educational alternatives, this analysis of teacher response uses fieldwork and data collected from four sites: Alum Rock, California; Cincinnati, Ohio; Eugene, Oregon; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The data for each district include teacher surveys, field notes from visits to several alternative programs, interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents, and documents describing the district's system of alternatives. Although based on data from only four sites (primarily Alum Rock), the findings agree with previous research on how teachers evaluate and respond to alternative programs.

Teachers tend to evaluate a program on its advantages and disadvantages for parents, students, and themselves. They judge its relative advantages for themselves by how the program affects their working conditions--personal control over where, what, and how they teach; workload; peer relationships; and resource distribution.

Teachers, generally, agree on three potentially negative effects of alternative programs:

- Although most teachers favor the parental choice that alternatives offer, they are more concerned about the effects on students. The data show that teachers were highly skeptical

that parents could or would make good educational choices for their children. Many also had doubts about the positive educational effects of alternatives in general.

- Despite the fact that many teachers see their increased influence over educational and other school-level decisions as an advantage of alternative programs, most are reluctant to have managerial duties added to their teaching duties. In the study, the greatest number of complaints about workloads came from districts that gave teachers primary responsibility for developing and managing programs, without corresponding released time.
- Limited resources and pressure from parents often make districts house several programs in one (usually neighborhood) school. However, most teachers prefer working in single-program schools because they believe multiprogram schools increase competition and tension among staff.

Teachers responded more positively to programs that struck a reasonable balance among consumer interests, district support, and their professional concerns. In districts that increased teachers' responsibilities without giving them commensurate support, teachers felt overworked and tended to become disenchanted with alternatives. Teachers also responded negatively to programs when consumer interests overrode their autonomy and program control, for example, district policy that allowed parents to have children admitted or transferred on demand.

The report shows that teachers respond more positively to programs when the district provides effective leadership and ongoing, active support. However, teachers are also very sensitive to inequities in resource distribution. Both regular and alternative-program teachers perceived inequities in funding, but from different perspectives. Alternative teachers complained that their special curricular or classroom-structural needs were not met and that they had to work harder. In contrast, many regular teachers believed that alternative programs were given special amenities and attracted the best students.

However, most recognized the alternatives' legitimate need for curriculum development, in-service training, and program management resources. They tended to question district policies only when the gap between support for regular and alternative programs became too apparent.

The report makes the following recommendations for district policies:

- To help parents make informed choices, districts should provide funds to more effectively disseminate and explain information about the rules and substantive differences among programs.
- To balance the needs and interests of consumers, teachers, and the school organization, districts should develop plans that include giving teachers management support, ameliorating the negative effects of multiprogram schools, and establishing admissions and transfer policies that do not radically interrupt the smooth flow of classroom instruction over the semester and school year.
- To overcome perceptions of inequities, districts should recognize how sensitive teachers are to this issue and take steps not only to make funding more equitable but to make teachers aware of its equity. This would also help overcome some of the tensions and competition that arise in multiprogram schools, especially in schools that house both regular and alternative programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have accomplished half as much research as reported here without the close collaboration of Gail Bass, Peggie Thomas, and Dan Weiler, my colleagues at Rand who worked with me on this study. If I hide occasionally behind the editorial "we," it is because the four of us have spent many hours discussing the issues involved in implementing alternatives, and I believe we have developed a great deal of agreement about these issues. Nevertheless, I bear full responsibility for the weaknesses of the report.

The study greatly benefited from the cooperation of hundreds of administrators and teachers in the four districts we studied. To give adequate credit to these many fine people would require a book in itself, and I hope that this report does justice to the great diversity of their views and experiences.

Steve Crocker, Lorraine McDonnell, and John Pincus (also at Rand) reviewed a preliminary version of this report and offered a number of suggestions for its improvement, as did Arthur Harris from the Alum Rock School District.

Finally, Cathleen Stasz took on the task of revising the draft for publication, her most noteworthy contribution being Chapter 2. Her work benefited greatly from Lorraine McDonnell's painstaking and helpful review of the final version of the manuscript.

CONTENTS

PREFACE iii

SUMMARY vii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi

TABLES xv

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 1
   Objectives of the Report 2
   Method 3
   Overview of Districts Studied 4
   Organization of the Report 7

2. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 8
   Teachers' Perceptions of Alternative Education 8
   Teachers' Professional Concerns about Alternatives 14
   Policies Governing Alternative Education 21
   Implementation Policies 24
   Conclusions and Policy Recommendations 30

3. ALTERNATIVES IN ALUM ROCK 33
   The Setting 33
   A Brief History of the Voucher Demonstration 33
   District Goals and Constraints 35
   Implementation Policies 37
   Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternatives 43
   Perceived Effects on Students and Parents 47
   Perceived Effects on Teachers 49
   Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives 58
   Summary 60

4. ALTERNATIVES IN MINNEAPOLIS 63
   The Setting 63
   A Brief History of Alternatives in Minneapolis 63
   District Goals and Constraints 64
   Implementation Policies 65
   Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternatives 69
   Perceived Effects on Students and Parents 70
   Perceived Effects on Teachers 73
   Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives 79
   Summary 79

Chapter

5. ALTERNATIVES IN EUGENE 82
The Setting 82
A Brief History of Alternatives in Eugene 82
District Goals and Constraints 83
Implementation Policies 84
Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternatives 88
Perceived Effects on Students and Parents 91
Perceived Effects on Teachers 92
Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives 96
Summary 96

6. ALTERNATIVES IN CINCINNATI 99
The Setting 99
A Brief History of Alternatives in Cincinnati 99
District Goals and Constraints 101
Implementation Policies 102
Teachers' Responses to Alternatives 105
Perceived Effects on Students and Parents 106
Perceived Effects on Teachers 108
Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives 111
Summary 113

Appendix

METHODOLOGY 115

REFERENCES 127

TABLES

2.1. Teachers' Perceptions of Who Benefits and Who Is Harmed by Alternatives 9

2.2. Teachers' Confidence in Parents' Program Choices 11

2.3. Perceived Educational Effect of Alternatives 12

2.4. Summary of Teachers' Personal Control of the Work Environment 15

2.5. Summary of Districts' Goals, Constraints, and Implementation Policies 21

3.1. What Alum Rock Teachers Liked about Alternatives 44

3.2. What Alum Rock Teachers Disliked about Alternatives 45

3.3. Perceived Educational Effect of Alternatives in Alum Rock . . 47

3.4. Teachers' Confidence in Parents' Program Choices in Alum Rock 49

3.5 Perceived Net Effect of Alternatives on Teachers in Alum Rock 58

3.6. Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives in Alum Rock . . . 60

4.1. What Minneapolis Teachers Liked about Alternatives 70

4.2. What Minneapolis Teachers Disliked about Alternatives 71

4.3. Perceived Educational Effect of Alternatives in Minneapolis . 73

4.4. Teachers' Confidence in Parents' Program Choices in Minneapolis 73

4.5. Perceived Net Effect of Alternatives on Teachers in Minneapolis 74

4.6. Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives in Minneapolis . . 79

5.1. What Eugene Teachers Liked about Alternatives 88

5.2. What Eugene Teachers Disliked about Alternatives 89

5.3. Perceived Educational Effect of Alternatives in Eugene 91

5.4. Teachers' Confidence in Parents' Program Choices in Eugene . . 92

5.5. Perceived Net Effect of Alternatives on Teachers in Eugene . . 93

5.6. Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives in Eugene 96

6.1. Perceived Effects of Alternatives on Students and Parents in Cincinnati 106

6.2. Teachers' Satisfaction with Their Assignments in Cincinnati . 108

6.3. Teachers' Overall Support for Alternatives in Cincinnati . . . 111

A.1. Summary of Response Rates for Alum Rock Teacher Surveys . . . 119

A.2. Response Rates for Rand's Spring 1977 Teacher Survey in Eugene 121

A.3. Response Rates for Rand's Spring 1977 Teacher Survey in Minneapolis 123

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

American education today recognizes that children differ in their interests and learning modes, and that there is no "one best system" for educating all children. Parents also differ in their ideas about what their children should learn and how they should be taught. Thus, the idea of offering parents some choice among educational programs is attractive both because it acknowledges the diversity of parents' concerns and because it may allow parents to match their children with an appropriate educational program. As a result, most school districts try to offer some variation in their educational program to accommodate the differing needs and interests of their students.

A significant number of school districts have tried to develop policies and programs that provide parents with a choice among educational settings for their children. In most school districts, though, these alternative programs are relatively few in number and affect only a small percentage of students. A few districts, however, have offered parents an extensive range of alternative programs from which to choose.

Rand's study of alternative education focuses on four school districts that have made major commitments to developing distinctive educational programs and offering parents a choice among them. We chose to focus our study on districts with significant commitments to alternatives, in large part because we were interested in the potential of alternatives as a major educational innovation.

This report, one in a series of Rand reports on alternative education, examines the perceptions and attitudes of teachers toward the idea of parental choice. A separate report focusing on teachers' responses to alternatives was considered worthwhile for several reasons:

- Teachers have extensive first-hand knowledge about how alternative education works in practice.
- Teachers individually and collectively are powerful enough to have a major effect on any new school program.

- Teachers are ultimately responsible for making alternative education a reality in the classroom.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

This report has three main objectives:

1. To identify those features of an alternative education system that are most significant to teachers;
2. To identify possible relationships between district policies governing alternative education and teachers' responses to alternatives; and
3. To make recommendations based on these districts' experience that might assist others wishing to implement educational alternatives.

To meet the first objective, we surveyed alternative and regular school teachers to obtain their perceptions about alternative education. These perceptions provided answers to the following questions:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of alternative education?
- How do teachers perceive that alternatives affect their professional life?

To meet the second objective, we sought information on a variety of issues related to alternatives, including a district's reasons for implementing alternatives, the types of alternatives attempted, the rules developed to govern the system of alternatives in each district, and the role of district leadership and community forces in shaping that system. We addressed two major questions:

- To what extent are district goals and constraints associated with differences in teachers' responses?
- To what extent are implementation strategies associated with differences in teachers' responses?

Finally, we drew conclusions and policy implementations from data collected in the study.

METHOD

Site Selection

Four districts, each having alternative educational programs, were selected for this study. These districts were medium to large in size; total enrollment varied from 14,000 to 66,000 students. We chose these districts from among more than 30 districts that had experimented with alternatives, primarily on the basis of their diverse approaches in implementing alternatives. (The appendix briefly describes our criteria for selecting districts.)

Data Collection and Analysis

The following data were collected from each district: (1) one or more teacher surveys; (2) field notes from visits to several alternative programs in each district; (3) interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents; and (4) documentary data describing each district's system of alternatives. (The appendix describes in some detail the information collected in each district.)

The exploratory nature of this study led to a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Each site, then, represents a case study of alternative education. We chose the case study approach to reveal common challenges the districts faced and to document their implementation strategies. We conducted some quantitative analyses within each site to determine which of the teachers' concerns most influenced their general perceptions about alternative education. Finally, we made between-district comparisons in an attempt to find general conclusions that would support subsequent policy recommendations.

We acknowledge the shortcomings of the quantitative analyses, but feel that, coupled with the qualitative case studies, they still provide useful information to policymakers. Because of the small number of cases, the purposeful selection of diverse cases, and the differences in data collected across cases (e.g., in Cincinnati, we were unable to conduct a teacher survey comparable to those administered in the other three districts), quantitative analyses were interpreted with some caution. However, even with such diversity between districts, we observed some generalizations that suggest valid policy recommendations. The case studies comprise information from various sources and provide rich insight into each district's implementation process. Readers with questions, interests, or concerns other than those addressed in this analytical section may find relevant information in the case studies reported in Chapters 3 through 6.

OVERVIEW OF DISTRICTS STUDIED

The specific districts we studied were:

- Alum Rock, San Jose, California;
- Minneapolis School District No. 1, Minneapolis, Minnesota;
- School District 4J, Eugene Oregon; and
- The Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Alum Rock

Alum Rock is a racially mixed, relatively poor suburban school district. The neighborhood schools are well-balanced racially and ethnically, in spite of a high transiency rate and a general population decline. Most residents are lower-middle or lower class, have had little formal education, and work in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. In 1972, more than a third of the families qualified for welfare, and three-fourths of the students qualified for school lunch programs.

As a result of this poverty, the school district experienced severe financial difficulties, which motivated the superintendent to lobby for participation in the federally funded voucher demonstration. At the outset, six schools agreed to participate by offering at least three different programs for parents to choose from. At its peak, 51 programs participated in the demonstration. For Alum Rock, the voucher demonstration opened up a number of opportunities, such as educational innovation, greater decisionmaking for principals and teachers, and increased participation for parents and students.

The "mini-school" programs reflected the interests of the teachers who proposed and developed them. Some were based on innovative instructional methods, others on alternative subject matter.

Minneapolis

In Minneapolis, a city of 400,000, the schools suffered from the usual problems of older urban districts: decreasing enrollment, declining test scores, inadequate finances and facilities, and inability to accommodate the educational needs of its growing minority population. A climate of educational reform, begun in the mid-1960s, promoted such goals as basic skills instruction, educational alternatives, decentralization, and desegregation. Consumer demands in the university community in the district's southeastern section motivated the alternative system we encountered. In 1971 the United States Office of Education funded a five-year, experimental schools program--Southeast Alternatives (SEA)--to create educational choice.

Near the end of SEA's first year, a federal court ordered Minneapolis to desegregate its schools. The apparent success of the pilot SEA projects contributed toward using alternatives to address integration problems. The SEA program was expanded by pairing or clustering schools to create larger, racially balanced attendance areas. This strategy made busing students less odious to parents, because their children were bused to schools chosen for the educational program. In 1973, feasibility studies began to implement a citywide program of educational alternatives in grades K through 6.

Citywide programs adopted SEA's three method-oriented models for teaching the basic skills. The "contemporary" program offered a traditional teaching approach in self-contained classes for each grade level. The "continuous progress" program featured upgraded, team-taught classes. Finally, the "open" program increased opportunity for students' self-direction and choice in their learning activities.

Eugene

Purely educational reasons motivated Eugene's alternative programs. In this predominately white, middle-class university town (15 percent of the population of 95,000 are University of Oregon students) prevails a strong tradition of public participation in government and educational progressiveness. The city has not experienced the social, political, or financial problems that motivated alternatives in other districts.

In 1973, the hiring of a new superintendent sparked community interest in making the current educational program more "open" and "humanistic." The new superintendent supported this goal, but was limited by the district's financial conservatism. As a result, teachers had to propose alternative programs that could not exceed the cost of regular school programs. By 1978, the district had established nine alternative programs with fewer than 1000 students. Most programs were method-oriented: They attempted to create an open classroom structure and increase opportunities for self-directed learning.

Cincinnati

As an older, industrial city, Cincinnati faced increasing costs for urban services, a declining tax base, and migration of middle-class families to the suburbs. Thus, the school district's overall enrollment declined, but the proportion of black students increased. Because schools reflected the racial, class, and ethnic segregation of Cincinnati's neighborhoods, integration was the primary motivation for alternatives.

In 1974, the school board pursued a voluntary integration plan by offering "quality integrated education" at strategically located neighborhood schools. Alternative schools were both method- and content-oriented, occupied several sites, and had no local attendance areas. Some of the first schools were developed from existing federally funded programs, but alternatives relied on local resources for support. In 1975-1976, the school board allocated substantial extra funds to expand the voluntary-integration, alternative program. Programs varied from German bilingual and Individually Guided Education to applied arts and physical education.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Chapter 2 presents findings, discusses the major issues listed above, and concludes with several policy recommendations.

Chapters 3 through 6 each examine the implementation strategy of a particular district and how teachers responded to that strategy. Chapter 3 describes the system of alternatives attempted in Alum Rock. Alum Rock makes a good starting point for several reasons. First, we know more about Alum Rock than we do about any of the other districts.[1] Second, Alum Rock's system of alternatives was one of the largest we studied. (About 60 percent of the district's teachers and students participated.) Finally, Alum Rock's system of alternatives was probably the most radical in its effect on teachers. Alum Rock's system divided every participating school into two or more mini-schools. Each mini-school had a large discretionary budget and almost total freedom to operate as it liked, except that the mini-schools were expected to admit all students who applied.

Chapter 4 describes Minneapolis' system of alternatives, which was about as large as that attempted in Alum Rock. (It involved 60 percent of the district's elementary teachers.) However, the system was not as decentralized and not as radically consumer-oriented as Alum Rock's. For these and other reasons, the system did not arouse as strong reactions among teachers as in Alum Rock.

Chapter 5 describes the system of alternatives in Eugene, which was the smallest of the four systems we studied, involving only about 5 percent of the district's teachers. It was similar to Alum Rock in giving teachers substantial control over their own small programs, but it departed radically from Alum Rock in its rules for determining program admissions.

Chapter 6 describes Cincinnati's system of alternatives, which involved a much smaller proportion of teachers (about 15 percent). Compared to the other three districts, Cincinnati's system was most like that of Minneapolis.

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[1] For the original Rand study of the Alum Rock voucher demonstration, we collected data from September 1972 through August 1976. The study was expanded to include the other three districts, where we collected data from 1976 to 1977.

Chapter 2

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS[1]

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

In this section we examine teachers' voluntary responses when asked to name the advantages or disadvantages of alternative education. In addition, we asked teachers to evaluate the effect of alternatives on the quality of education in their district.

Perceptions of Advantages and Disadvantages

Most teachers' responses to questions about alternatives could be categorized as concerns about students, parents, and teachers themselves. When teachers were asked to describe the main advantages of alternatives, most mentioned advantages to parents, students, or both (see Table 2.1A). Of those teachers citing advantages for parents, most mentioned the availability of choice per se; some also said that alternatives increased parents' interest and involvement in the schools. Of those teachers citing advantages of alternatives for students, some stressed the value of choice per se; others stressed the match between alternatives and different learning needs of students.

While more teachers in Alum Rock expressed advantages for parents than for students, the reverse was true in the other districts. One possible explanation for this difference is that the philosophy of the voucher demonstration in Alum Rock was radically proconsumer, advocating parents' rights to make educational choices for their children. Thus, Alum Rock teachers viewed the demonstration as primarily to the advantage of parents. In contrast, other districts supported alternatives more on student-centered grounds. Therefore, teachers in these districts perceived alternatives as providing more educational options and thus better serving the diversity of student needs and interests.

A greater percentage of Alum Rock's alternative teachers cited advantages of alternatives for teachers than did any other group of

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[1] This chapter was written by Cathleen Stasz.

Table 2.1

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHO BENEFITS AND WHO IS HARMED BY ALTERNATIVES

(A)

What do you think are the main positive features of the voucher demonstration? (Alum Rock, 1974)

What do you see as the chief advantages of educational alternatives in your district? (Eugene and Minneapolis, 1977)[a]

	Percent Citing Advantages[b]				
Teacher Group	For Students	For Parents	For Teachers	General Advantages	N
Alternative teachers					
Alum Rock	39	48	57	61	84
Eugene	54	46	27	50	22
Minneapolis	76	32	16	9	171[c]
Regular teachers					
Alum Rock	37	43	33	46	67
Eugene	55	48	15	8	137[c]
Minneapolis[d]	80	7	13	7	15[d]

(B)

What do you think are the main negative features of the voucher demonstration? (Alum Rock, 1974)

What do you see as the chief disadvantages of alternatives? (Eugene and Minneapolis, 1977)[a]

	Percent Citing Disadvantages[b]				
Teacher Group	For Students	For Parents	For Teachers	General Disadvantages	N
Alternative teachers					
Alum Rock	13	--	88	57	84
Eugene	26	16	32	26	19
Minneapolis[c]	46	--	43	34	170[c]
Regular teachers					
Alum Rock	30	--	89	41	67
Eugene[c]	49	--	35	32	122[c]
Minneapolis[d]	81	--	19	--	16[d]

[a] Since Rand had to rely on data provided by Cincinnati, responses to these or similar questions were not available.

[b] The percentages shown for each teacher group may sum to more than 100 percent because of multiple responses.

[c] Weighted to correct for different sampling rates among different types of schools.

[d] Based on data from only two schools.

teachers (Table 2.1A). Because alternative teachers had primary responsibility for the design, development, and management of alternative programs, they probably assumed very powerful roles in the district. Federal support of the voucher demonstration and the public attention that it received may have highlighted the alternative teachers' importance. In contrast, alternative teachers in Minneapolis and Cincinnati did not enjoy decisionmaking roles. In Eugene, alternatives received neither extra funding nor special status.

Teachers' perceptions of the disadvantages of alternatives are summarized in Table 2.1B. While few teachers saw alternatives as disadvantageous for parents, they had reservations about the value of alternatives for students. Teachers cited lack of emphasis on basic skills, discontinuity of the curriculum, and parents' inability to make good choices as major disadvantages to students (see also Tables 3.2, 4.2, and 5.2). In every district more regular teachers named disadvantages to students than did alternative teachers. One possible explanation for this finding is simply that teachers are more in favor of their own programs.

A greater percentage of Alum Rock teachers cited disadvantages for teachers than teachers in other districts (Table 2.1B). One possible explanation for this finding is that alternative teachers in Alum Rock exercised greater control over their programs, and hence their workload and responsibilities increased. At the same time, regular teachers cited too much competition among teachers as the major disadvantage for teachers (see Table 3.2).

In citing disadvantages to students, teachers from all districts mentioned parental inability to make good program choices. The strength of their skepticism is illustrated in Table 2.2. When asked directly, most teachers felt that parents possessed an inadequate knowledge base for making appropriate decisions. Even in Alum Rock, where parental choice was a dominant rationale for offering alternatives, less than half of the alternative teachers (47 percent) had confidence in parental choice. Their confidence rose in the second year (64 percent), but by the end of the demonstration two-thirds of the teachers had no confidence in parental choice.

Table 2.2

TEACHERS' CONFIDENCE IN PARENTS' PROGRAM CHOICES
(In percent)

(A)

Do you think parents had enough information to choose among programs in your school?

Response	Alum Rock Alternative Teachers Year One (1973)	Alum Rock Alternative Teachers Year Two (1974)
Yes	47	64
No	53	36
	100	100
N	97	239

(B)

Do you think most parents know enough about the educational programs being offered in your district to be able to make good program choices for their children?

Response	Alum Rock (1977)	Eugene[a] (1977)	Minneapolis[b] (1977)
Yes	16	17	25
No	67	59	58
Do not know	17	25	17
	100	100[c]	100
N	476	180	231

[a] Weighted to reflect different sampling rates for single-program and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Alternative teachers only, weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[c] Rounding error.

In sum, teachers recognized and supported parent choice per se as an advantage of alternative education. However, teachers felt that parents lacked the necessary knowledge to exercise that right to the benefit of students. This dilemma has important implications for policy and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Perceptions of Educational Benefits

Supporters of alternative education argue that alternatives provide better educational programs for many children. This assertion suggests a perceived difference in quality between alternative and regular programs. We asked alternative and regular teachers if they thought the existence of alternatives affected the quality of education received by the children in their districts. Table 2.3 shows 1977 survey data from three districts.

Not surprisingly, more alternative teachers felt that alternative education had a positive effect on educational quality than did regular teachers in each district. Teachers, like anyone else, prefer to view the outcome of their work as successful. In Alum Rock the positive perceptions of alternative teachers steadily decreased as the voucher demonstration progressed. In 1973, for example, the percentage of original and expansion alternative teachers who perceived a positive effect on educational quality was 74 percent and 52 percent, respectively. Regular teachers were not much more enthusiastic at the beginning of the demonstration than at the end: 33 percent felt that quality increased and 51 percent perceived no change (see Table 3.3).

In Minneapolis, alternative teachers' perceptions of quality varied across the three programs; more teachers in open and continuous progress programs felt alternatives were positively affecting educational quality (see Table 4.3).

Teachers in Eugene seemed most positive about the alternatives. None of the alternative teachers perceived negative effects on educational quality; only 15 percent of the regular teachers expressed a negative viewpoint (see Table 5.3).

Cincinnati teachers' overall assessment of alternatives was similar to that in other districts. The district's March 1976 survey

Table 2.3

PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES
(In percent)

In general, how do you think the voucher demonstration will affect (has affected) the quality of education received by the children of Alum Rock?[a] (Alum Rock, 1977)

In general, how do you think the existence of alternatives has affected the quality of education received by the children of your district? (Eugene and Minneapolis, 1977)

Group	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
Alternative Teachers			
Alum Rock: Original	52	41	7
Expansion	36	51	13
Eugene	92	8	—
Minneapolis[a]	59	30	11
Regular Teachers			
Alum Rock	25	50	25
Eugene[b]	35	50	15
Minneapolis[c]	44	22	33

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for single-program and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[c] Based on data from only two schools; should be treated as highly tentative.

asked all teachers to rate, on a scale from 1 (poor) to 7 (excellent), the effects of alternatives on students' attitudes, motivation, and academic achievement (see Table 6.1). For all three indicators of educational quality, alternative teachers (N=369) gave higher ratings than regular teachers (N=2023). In addition, a survey of one or more teachers at 10 neighborhood schools (conducted by the School Foundation of Greater Cincinnati) reported that teachers in six schools felt alternatives had a positive effect on students' learning.

In sum, teachers' perceptions about alternatives are, in part, consumer-oriented. They evaluate advantages and disadvantages by the effects of alternatives on students and their parents, the intended beneficiaries of the system. In part, their perceptions are also professionally oriented when teachers cite the advantages and disadvantages of increased autonomy and decisionmaking. In addition, more alternative than regular teachers perceived alternative programs as generally increasing the quality of education in their district.

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

We discuss teachers' professional concerns under three overlapping themes: personal control of the work environment, teachers' workload, and teacher-peer relations. At this point, our purpose is to consider how teachers' professional concerns may influence their general perceptions of alternative education.

Personal Control of the Work Environment

Teachers can exercise personal control over their work environment in one or more of the following ways: (1) choosing the kind of school or program they will teach in; (2) participating in school and program-level decisionmaking; and/or (3) insulating their classrooms from outside influences and pressures. These mechanisms can be conveniently labeled as choice, voice, and autonomy.[2]

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[2] In a system of alternatives, these three mechanisms of control (choice, voice, and autonomy) remain conceptually distinct but often overlap in practice. For example, the degree of teachers' voice in determining program size can affect their degree of choice among

Table 2.4 summarizes these aspects of personal control for teachers in each district. Overall, teachers in Alum Rock and Eugene exercised personal control over more aspects of their work environment than teachers in Minneapolis and Cincinnati. The important difference between Alum Rock and Eugene was in teachers' autonomy. In Eugene, teachers set the enrollment limits for their programs and were free to accept student transfers as they wished. In contrast, Alum Rock's proconsumer model supported open enrollments and parental freedom to transfer their children among programs. Alum Rock's policy severely threatened teachers' autonomy and brought so many complaints from teachers that it was eventually changed. In the second year of the demonstration, the district retained the open enrollment policy on the books but declined to enforce it. By year three, the mini-school's right to limit enrollment and transfers had become the district's de facto policy.

District policies in Minneapolis and Cincinnati gave teachers less control over their work environments. Of the two, Minneapolis' teachers had more restrictions. Minneapolis offered three types of programs, from which teachers could list their preferred order of assignment choices. Although the district tried to honor teachers' choices, its higher priority was to create and staff programs according to an overall implementation plan. Thus, teachers might be assigned to programs they did not choose. Cincinnati offered many more programs, and teachers typically volunteered for and were assigned to the programs of their choice.

Below, we examine how teachers' perceptions of alternative education may have been influenced by their personal control of the work environment. As mentioned earlier, teachers volunteered these perceptions in response to an open-ended question about advantages and disadvantages of alternatives.

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programs. Also, the presence of choice or voice can lead teachers to feel highly autonomous, even in programs that have strong norms for teachers' behavior. (If a teacher happens to agree with a program's norms, he or she does not necessarily view these norms as a constraint on his or her autonomy.)

Table 2.4

SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' PERSONAL CONTROL OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Site	Choice	Voice	Autonomy
Alum Rock	Teachers voted on whether their school would participate Teachers volunteered for program	All program-level decisionmaking	Open enrollments: Parents determined student transfer/enrollment policies; program could expand beyond teachers' wishes
Minneapolis	Teachers listed choices and district tried to comply; district could transfer teachers at will	District level management	Teachers could be assigned to programs they did not choose; only three types of alternative programs
Eugene	Teachers volunteered for program	All program decisionmaking	Teachers determine enrollment; set own limits
Cincinnati	Teachers volunteered for program assignments	District level management	Much variability among programs; teachers usually in preferred program

Teachers' personal control over their work environment varied extensively across districts. Alum Rock's teachers had the most control: They voted on whether their school would participate in the demonstration and decided how many and what kinds of programs to offer. Alternative teachers designed and managed programs, influenced budget and personnel decisions, and often determined program size. However, their strong initial influence gradually waned over the course of the demonstration. This was probably due to such factors as teacher "burnout" and gradual withdrawal of financial and leadership support.

We found a good deal of evidence that control over the work environment highly influenced alternative teachers' perceptions of alternatives in Alum Rock. More teachers in this group perceived teachers as the beneficiaries of alternative education. They specifically cited increased teacher influence and autonomy as major advantages. In naming disadvantages of alternative education, Alum Rock's teachers overwhelmingly cited teacher-related concerns (about 89 percent of the teachers in Alum Rock compared with 19 to 35 percent of the teachers in Eugene and Minneapolis). Both alternative teachers (42 percent) and regular teachers (34 percent) named too much time, too many meetings, and too many administrative duties as the disadvantages of alternatives for teachers. These figures are striking in two respects. First, regular teachers in Alum Rock joined with their peers in perceiving alternatives as highly disadvantageous to teachers' control over their work environment. Regular teachers were unaware of or did not perceive the advantages gained by alternative teachers, but there was apparently little doubt that greater control ultimately carried a high cost. Second, more teachers in Eugene, the other district with substantial teacher control, cited student concerns over teacher concerns in connection with advantages and disadvantages of alternatives. Apparently, Eugene's teachers did not experience greater control or were not as impressed with their influence over program decisions as were teachers in Alum Rock. Several factors may account for this difference. As mentioned earlier, Alum Rock's voucher demonstration radically changed the district's school system. It attracted federal funds, over which teachers had some control, national publicity, and the intense involvement of parents and teachers. In contrast, Eugene had a long history of alternative education, and its expansion to new alternatives was relatively modest. Teacher participation in alternatives was voluntary, and no special funds were received from outside the district. Except for extra funds to launch a new program, the district provided equal funding for regular and alternative programs. It seems likely that these differences would influence teachers' perceptions of their role in alternative education.

Teachers in Minneapolis and Cincinnati had much less control over their work environment. In these districts, program implementation and management were centralized: Superintendents chose participating schools and sometimes selected specific program types; district administrators or program coordinators developed programs; principals or nonteaching coordinators typically managed these programs. In general, alternative teachers in these districts were happy with their program assignments and felt they exercised greater influence over program decisionmaking than did regular teachers.

The general picture thus far indicates that control over the work environment was a more significant issue in Alum Rock than in other districts. To understand how this occurred, we need to examine more closely teachers' perceptions of control within the situational context that shaped them, namely, the district's goals, constraints, and implementation policies. Thus, we will come back to teachers' perceptions of the work environment when we compare district implementation strategies later in this chapter.

Teachers' Workload

Teachers ordinarily decide how many "extra" hours beyond the minimally established school day, and many teachers work well beyond their minimum job requirements. Because teaching can easily become all-consuming, most teachers, both collectively[3] and individually,[4] seek some reasonable limits to their work.

Because alternative teachers in Alum Rock experienced a sharp increase in their influence over program decisions, it is not surprising that most teachers also reported an increase in their workload. After the first year of the demonstration, 51 percent of the alternative teachers reported an increase of at least six more working hours per week. After two years, 43 percent of the original and 40 percent of the new alternative teachers reported extra workload as a major negative feature of the demonstration. Twenty-two percent specifically complained about their new administrative and budgetary duties.

Most alternative teachers in Minneapolis, Cincinnati, and Eugene also agreed that participation in alternatives increased their workload. However, few teachers volunteered that extra work was a major disadvantage of alternatives: 11 percent in Minneapolis and 17 percent in Eugene. In Cincinnati, teacher enthusiasm was reportedly so high that one principal locked his school to prevent teachers from working on Saturdays. In sum, while all alternative teachers reported working harder or longer, Alum Rock's teachers, who had the greatest program control, felt most overburdened by their responsibilities.

Teacher-Peer Relations

Alternatives may change the pattern of peer relations among teachers in at least two ways. First, the creation of distinctive educational programs could provide participating teachers with a clearer common focus for their efforts, thus stimulating peer group interaction and cohesiveness. Second, the system of alternatives may foster competition among schools and programs, thus contributing to a deterioration of relationships among teachers in competing units. We observed both of these patterns in this study.

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[3] "There is no question that teachers have used the power generated by collective bargaining to control, curtail, and receive extra compensation for time spent working outside the regularly scheduled school day." (Perry and Wildman, 1970, p. 201.)

[4] In a limited survey of teachers, Hill (1971) found that "the most important criterion for selection or rejection of a new program was the amount of extra work required by the teacher" (p. 425).

In Alum Rock, a few alternative teachers reported increased teacher teamwork (11 percent of all teachers responding) and increased stimulation and growth (7 percent) as advantages of alternative education for teachers. About half as many regular teachers cited these advantages. However, both regular and alternative teachers perceived too much competition among teachers as a major disadvantage of alternatives (37 percent and 46 percent, respectively). Even in the third year of the demonstration, one-third of the teachers cited tension between programs as a major problem. The severity of the problem varied from school to school.

In Minneapolis, 9 percent of the alternative teachers volunteered that too much competition was a disadvantage of alternatives for teachers. However, 27 percent responded "Yes" when directly asked whether tension among programs had ever been a major problem in their district. In addition, 15 percent said it was a problem in the last year.

Eugene's alternative teachers did not perceive teacher competition as a disadvantage of alternatives, and only 12 percent of the regular teachers reported this perception. Finally, data from Cincinnati's survey indicate that alternative teachers rated cooperation among teachers higher than did regular teachers.

In sum, teacher-peer relations were usually expressed as tension or competition, not cooperation. The data indicate that problems from competition were highest in Alum Rock and Minneapolis, particularly in multiprogram schools. Fifty-two percent of the teachers in Alum Rock said they preferred a single educational program in their school, while 37 percent preferred multiprogram schools. Of the Minneapolis teachers reporting program tensions as a major problem during the past year, 32 percent were in multiprogram schools, compared with 11 percent in single-program schools. Moreover, over half of Minneapolis' teachers, in both types of schools, said they would prefer to teach in a single-program school. We also saw some evidence of tension in Cincinnati's multiprogram schools, where alternative programs enjoyed physical amenities (such as carpeting or newly painted halls) that were denied to the regular program. In Eugene, however, fewer teachers reported tensions. Although 28 percent of multiprogram school teachers (both regular and alternative) felt that program tension was a major problem in the past, only 9 percent perceived it as a major problem in the past year. Fifty-six percent of these teachers preferred their multiprogram schools.

These differences may result, in part, from situational factors that forced the multiprogram or school-within-school organization in some districts. This was the case in both Alum Rock and Cincinnati, where the parents or school boards lobbied heavily for neighborhood schools with alternative programs in each. Teachers had little voice in the matter. Although the neighborhood issue was alive in Eugene, the district's response was substantially different. Teachers decided whether their program would be a neighborhood or district-wide alternative. For district-wide alternatives, the district assigned programs to schools with excess space. Thus, multiprogram schools resulted from teacher choice and practical convenience rather than from outside pressures.

In Minneapolis, the situation was more complicated. Court-ordered desegregation eliminated the neighborhood school issue and essentially favored the single-school alternative. However, six of the 33 schools that offered alternatives were multiprogram--a decision made by administrators, not teachers. Thus, the multiprogram schools were the outliers in a district geared toward single-school alternatives.

POLICIES GOVERNING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions about alternative education are undoubtedly influenced by the situational context in which they occur. In this part we examine such features as district goals, constraints, and implementation strategies to understand this relationship. In doing so, we discuss the main characteristics for each district summarized in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5

SUMMARY OF DISTRICTS' GOALS, CONSTRAINTS, AND IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

			Implementation Policies			
Site	Goals	Constraints	Management Responsibility	Student Admission and Transfer	Financial Support	Leadership Support
Alum Rock	Obtain federal funds Allow parents to choose among educational options	Neighborhood school issue forced school-within-school form of alternatives	Teacher managed: Teachers had responsibility for design, development, and management of all programs	Open enrollment, tried to satisfy parents Written policy of unlimited transfer, but teachers had actual control	Federal Staff development, with discretionary funds for each mini-school Also state compensatory education funds	Strong support by superintendent System collapsed when superintendent left
Minneapolis	Obtain federal funds Desegregate Promote educational innovation Satisfy vocal parent group	No major constraints	District managed: Superintendent chose participating schools Principals managed programs Nonteaching coordinators managed some programs	Open enrollment, with constraints (e.g., principal permission to transfer; teachers could assign students with parental consent)	Federal Primary use for teacher training and staff development Also district subsidies	Strong support by superintendent and parent group
Eugene	No stated goals Long history of alternative education	Alternatives did not receive special funding	Teacher managed: Teachers developed and initiated programs Head teachers or principals or consensus managed programs	Teachers set enrollment Over enrollment applied to waiting lists	Local funding, equal to regular programs	Alternative program teachers and community
Cincinnati	Desegregate Provide educational options	Implemented with very limited funds School board supported neighborhood schools	District managed: Superintendent selected programs and sites. Administrators, teachers, and program coordinators developed programs	Encouraged enrollment, but district made set limits Overenrollment applied to waiting lists	Local funding Primary use for extra staff	Strongest support by superintendent School board support at first

District Goals and Constraints

For each district, the goals or motivation behind the implementation of alternatives were often intertwined with its educational philosophy. In Alum Rock, the district's primary reason for implementing alternatives was pragmatic: to obtain federal funds at a time when district finances were extremely tight. Alum Rock essentially adopted the radically proconsumer stance that parents have a *right* to choose educational programs for their children. Four of the five stated goals of the voucher demonstration mentioned parental concerns; the fifth goal was to increase educational achievement of participating students. The major constraint in designing the implementation was the parents' desire to maintain neighborhood schools. This forced a school-within-school form of alternatives, with each school offering at least two distinct programs.

Minneapolis initiated the Southeast Alternatives project to bring about a "comprehensive change" in a cluster of four schools by creating educational choices. Its belief in educational innovation was initially motivated by federal funds and the desire to satisfy vocal parent groups. Later, the district expanded the program to aid the district's efforts to desegregate. Minneapolis faced relatively few political or resource constraints in implementing alternatives.

Eugene has a long history of experimenting with educational alternatives. Its relatively modest expansion was in response to a small, articulate group of parents who felt that the schools should offer programs for different learning styles. Alternatives were not seen as a strategy for political or educational reform and were not intended to desegregate the district's schools. Program implementation was constrained by the superintendent's decision that alternatives would not receive special funding. In addition, the parents' unwillingness to close any neighborhood schools tied up district funds that would have been used to create more alternative programs.

Cincinnati's alternative system was clearly motivated by desegregation. The district's strategy was to provide educational options that would attract white parents into integrated educational settings within the city school system. Implementation was constrained by very limited funds and the school board's support for neighborhood schools.

As a result, a few programs were added each year, with careful consideration given to improving racial balance and maintaining neighborhood schools.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

In this section, we describe each district's policies in four areas that appear to influence teachers' perception of alternatives: responsibility for program formation and management; student admission and transfer policies; financial support; and leadership support. Table 2.5 summarizes these policies for each district.

Management Responsibilities

In Alum Rock and Eugene, alternative teachers assumed primary responsibility for all aspects of program design, initiation, and management. In Alum Rock, teachers incurred both costs and benefits from this policy. Although many alternative teachers perceived increased teacher influence and autonomy as advantages of alternative education (52 percent), more teachers complained about overwork, lack of direction, and poor administration (69 percent; see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Eugene's alternative teachers did not feel as burdened (only 21 percent mentioned management-associated problems as a disadvantage) or as enamored with their management responsibilities in implementing alternatives. One explanation for this difference is that Alum Rock and Eugene had different histories and goals with respect to alternative education. For participating Alum Rock teachers, the demonstration constituted a major change from former practices. The standard school organization with district administration and support was replaced by a highly proconsumer, teacher-managed system with little district support. In some sense, teachers were really on their own to make alternatives work. For Eugene's teachers, however, implementing alternatives was routine. There were no strong outside pressures for teachers to "get moving" in creating programs, so expansion to alternatives was modest, low-key, and motivated primarily by the teachers' own enthusiasm. In Eugene, 27 percent of the alternative teachers cited teacher opportunity to have a choice as an advantage of alternatives (see Table 5.1).

In Minneapolis and Cincinnati, the district assumed primary responsibility for program selection, development, and management. As Table 2.5 shows, superintendents, principals, nonteaching coordinators and other administrators all had particular responsibilities. Because these districts were motivated to desegregate, centralized control and a district-wide view over alternative programs were probably necessary. As mentioned previously, few teachers complained about their workload in these districts.

Student Admission and Transfer Policies

The districts' student enrollment policies varied between two extremes: from total open enrollment to satisfy parents (Alum Rock) to set enrollments determined by teachers (Eugene). Under Alum Rock's policy, programs were required to accept all applicants during the open enrollment period, subject only to limitations of building capacity. This meant that teachers might be assigned to programs they did not want to teach in and that programs could expand beyond teachers' wishes. After the deadline, parents had to choose among those programs that still wanted more students. The official transfer policy was that parents had the right to transfer their students at any time. Teachers, however, objected very strongly to this policy and either ignored it completely or devised some way around it. After two years of controversy, the district finally conceded that mini-schools had the right to limit student transfers.

Minneapolis also adopted open enrollment but did not support strict proconsumer regulations. In placing and transferring students, the district considered program size, teacher availability, racial balance, and physical facilities, as well as parents' and students' choice. The district did not hesitate to reassign teachers to meet program demands.

Because Cincinnati's long-term commitment was to desegregate, it did not allow open enrollment. It aimed at encouraging parents to voluntarily send their children to racially desegregated alternative programs. Thus, enrollment and transfer policies included such considerations as racial balance, long-term program expansion plans, and the number of teachers who would be willing and qualified to teach in each program.

Eugene's official policy was that programs must be available to students, parents, and program staff by mutual consent. This meant that programs could set enrollments and had no obligation to expand, even in the face of excess demand. One program even restricted its admissions to siblings of students who were already in the program.

Just as these policies varied from one extreme to the other, so did teachers' reactions to them. Not surprisingly, Alum Rock's teachers responded most negatively to their district's policy. When asked to name the main negative features of the demonstration, 8 percent of the alternative teachers and 9 percent of the regular teachers cited worry about enrollments and jobs as a major disadvantage of alternatives for teachers. Furthermore, both alternative and regular teachers volunteered that enrollment problems were a major disadvantage (16 percent and 10 percent of teachers, respectively; see Table 3.2). Teachers who were queried in the other districts did not mention enrollment problems. Although Alum Rock's teachers were generally pleased with their program assignments (only 17 percent said they would prefer to teach elsewhere), many teachers worried about being transferred if enrollments dwindled. Forty-nine percent of the teachers in 1975 and 39 percent in 1976 expressed this concern.

In Minneapolis, alternative teachers were usually assigned to teach in their first-choice programs; 15 percent named teacher choice as an advantage of alternatives (see Table 4.1). However, 8 percent reported teachers' lack of choice as a disadvantage of alternatives, and 30 percent of the teachers claimed they had no choice in their program assignments.

Cincinnati's system of expanding program enrollment with teacher preferences in mind seemed to work well in that district. The district's own teacher survey indicated that 79 percent of the alternative teachers were satisfied with their assignments.

In Eugene, 27 percent of the alternative teachers and 8 percent of the regular teachers felt that giving teachers a choice was a chief advantage of alternatives (see Table 5.1). Although the term "choice" may represent other factors than program assignment, these data suggest that Eugene's teachers were to some extent satisfied with district policy.

Funding and Resource Distribution Policies

With regard to funding, the districts again ran the gamut. Alum Rock and Minneapolis received millions of dollars in federal funds, while Eugene's and Cincinnati's alternatives were implemented through local funding. In Alum Rock, funding was an important incentive for teachers to join the demonstration. In 1974, 84 percent of the alternative teachers agreed with the statement that "All things considered, the major benefit of the voucher system is the additional money received by schools in the district." Both alternative and regular teachers reported that the increase in funds was a major advantage of alternatives (61 percent and 46 percent of teachers, respectively; see Table 3.1). However, the effects of increased funding were not always positive. Teachers also reported that money was wasted and that they disliked the red tape associated with obtaining supplies (see Table 3.2). The data also indicated some competition for resources among programs in the same building. In 1976, for example, 36 percent of alternative teachers felt that fairness in allocating discretionary funds had been a major problem that year.

Minneapolis' teachers did not mention extra funds or resources as an advantage, but 17 percent of the alternative teachers named inadequate resources for alternatives as a disadvantage of alternatives. Thirty-seven percent thought that fairness in allocating resources had been a major problem in the district.

Teachers in Eugene offered only complaints about funding or resource distribution. In Eugene, where no extra funds were made available to alternatives, 16 percent of alternative teachers and 12 percent of regular teachers reported this lack of funding as a disadvantage (see Table 5.2). But only 3 percent of the teachers complained that resource distribution was inequitable.

Data from Cincinnati indicate that teacher concerns about the funding of alternatives were relatively widespread. For example, the district asked alternative and regular teachers in multiprogram schools if they agreed that "the allocation of materials and supplies to alternatives should be the same as that of other schools except for initial expenditures." Seventy percent of the regular teachers agreed with this statement, while 60 percent of the alternative teachers disagreed.

In every district except Eugene, the teacher union became involved in the issue of alternative program costs. Whether funding and resources are abundant or scarce, someone always feels that they are not receiving enough. The real issue, it seems, is whether or not the *distribution* of funds is equitable. We do not have the data to analyze the distribution process and equity problem further. We do know, however, that when equity was the *stated* policy, as in Eugene, very few teachers cited inequity as a problem.

Leadership Support

Table 2.5 indicates that alternative education was strongly advocated by the superintendent in three districts. Eugene's superintendent supported alternatives, but the situation there did not warrant a highly visible strategy.

Although the Alum Rock system represented a political position favoring parents' right to choose among educational options, the superintendent did not support the vouch system per se. He accepted the voucher idea as a worthy experiment for Alum Rock primarily as a means for improving educational offerings in the district. His leadership seemed crucial for implementing the demonstration. When he took a leave in 1974 and the acting superintendent and board withdrew the districts' commitment to the mini-school system, it quickly collapsed. Our teacher interviews suggested that this action signaled an end to the experiment, and teachers were unwilling to fight for an idea the district no longer endorsed.

Respondents throughout Minneapolis cited the superintendent's leadership as a critical factor in the success of alternatives. Again, the superintendent's strategy was to downplay the political issues (moderate proconsumerism and desegregation) and to focus on the educational advantages of alternatives for children. In this way, he was able to initiate the program successfully in a small area, gradually gain more support, and then argue for district-wide expansion.

In Eugene, the support for alternatives depended more heavily on teachers and parents than on the superintendent. Eugene's modest alternative movement was not politically motivated. It seemed that some teachers and parents were just ready for a change, and the arrival of a new superintendent, who was open to educational innovation, added to the momentum. Although the superintendent's support was moderate in comparison with other districts, it was adequate for the situation at hand.

Cincinnati's superintendent carefully orchestrated his support for alternatives to blend with the district's desegregation goals. He initiated alternatives on a small scale with limited financial support. To expand the system district-wide, he had to accommodate both the school board's interest in maintaining neighborhood schools and target enrollments to meet desegregation requirements, as well as balance teachers' interests in what they wanted to teach. His successor moved further away from the political issues but continued to support innovation strongly for its educational benefits. In the interests of all teachers, the Cincinnati teachers' union advocated a balance between alternative and regular programs to ensure equitable funding and resource distribution. It concurred with the new superintendent that alternatives posed some limitations in promoting racial balance.

In sum, teachers seem to perceive that strong leadership is necessary to *initiate* change. This opinion was generally voiced in every district we visited. It seems apparent, however, that leadership alone will not necessarily sustain alternatives. Alum Rock's superintendent initiated the demonstration by convincing teachers to be opportunistic. They would, he pointed out, have much to gain by trying the voucher experiment. But the teachers were left to implement the system without much substantive district support. The job proved too burdensome. When leadership changed and federal finances dwindled, the demonstration ultimately failed. The superintendents in Minneapolis and Cincinnati, however, participated in implementing the alternative programs and planning program expansion. Teachers, principals, district administration, and the community all supported alternatives on a continuing basis, so the programs grew even when superintendents changed. In Eugene, teachers were always operating in an essentially supportive environment. New leadership sparked change, but its modest scale did not require heavy maintenance.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of alternative education and its effect on their professional life. To understand these perceptions, we considered them in the context of the district's goals, constraints, and implementation strategies. This study supports the following conclusions:

Teachers support the idea of parental choice but are skeptical about parents' ability to make good program choices. Teachers recognize that education must be adapted to the diversity of children's interests and learning styles. Thus, schools must offer educational options, and parents and students should be able to choose among them. However, teachers strongly doubt that parents have the necessary knowledge to make appropriate choices for their children.

Genuinely proconsumer models of alternative education, that is, those that offer real options and aim to accommodate parental choices, need to educate the consumer. Policymakers should earmark funds and other resources for workshops, classes, or other forms of information dissemination. It is not enough to explain the regulations for participating in alternatives, such as rules for student enrollment and transfers or student transportation options. Parents, and in many cases students, may need assistance in understanding what different programs offer and how to make an appropriate choice.

Alternatives are more likely to succeed if teachers perceive a balance between consumer interests, district support, and their own professional concerns. Of the districts we visited, Alum Rock was the least balanced and the first to fail. Although many factors contributed to its failure, clearly teachers were overburdened with management responsibilities that required more district support than was received. Their decisionmaking control in some important areas, such as student enrollment and transfers, was overridden by consumer interests. Practically overnight, the demonstration brought a change that demanded that teachers, consumers, and administrators adopt new roles in a new environment. Most of Alum Rock's alternative teachers perceived themselves as both benefiting the most and suffering the most from alternative education. This outcome served none of the program's intended objectives.

The lesson for policymakers is that implementing alternative education requires, in part, some plan for balancing the needs and interests of consumers, teachers, and the school organization. Specific recommendations stemming from teachers' perceptions of problems include the following: Give teachers management support and do not make enrollment/transfer policies entirely consumer-oriented. In addition, the Minneapolis and Cincinnati experiences suggest that smooth implementation requires a small-scale beginning that has room for modifications as it grows. As would be expected, no amount of federal funding can ensure successful change overnight.[5]

Teachers are very sensitive to inequities in the workplace. All teachers want their fair share of support and resources to do their jobs. Their concern for fair allocation of district resources extends beyond sslaries to include such factors as class size, funds for teacher aides, and equal time with district resource specialists. Alternative programs, because of their "specialness," frequently receive more resources both through additional funds or simply extra attention from district administrators, the community, and the media. To the extent that teachers perceive inequities between alternative and regular programs, tension results. Tensions between teachers and programs may be very damaging: Teaching requires extensive interaction with peers, and teachers place high value on positive, noncompetitive peer relationships.

Our data indicate that inequities are felt on both sides. For example, some regular teachers perceieved that alternative programs were attracting all the best students and extra physical amenities.

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[5] See Berman and McLaughlin (1978).

Alternative teachers complained that they worked harder or were forced to work in certain alternative programs. As noted earlier, tensions ran very high in some districts, especially in multiprogram schools.

This conclusion identifies at least two recommendations for policymakers. First, policymakers should be aware that teachers are sensitive to inequities and that inequities produce tension. Teachers' concerns go beyond purely fiscal differences--most regular teachers accept the fact that programs initiated by federal funds have more dollars to spend per pupil. Their concerns include inequities that are not necessarily caused by extra dollars but by differences in enrollment policies, management policies, and community support. Second, tensions run higher in multiprogram schools, where alternative and regular programs are housed together, and teachers can freely observe differences in resource distribution. This suggests that alternatives should be physically separated from regular school programs, which may be difficult to implement because maintaining neighborhood schools is most desirable to parents. This issue was discussed at some point in every district we studied. Other observers agree that forcing alternatives to operate as schools-within-schools was a major contributor to the demise of Alum Rock's alternative program (see Thomas, 1978).

These conclusions and recommendations are based on data from only four districts, and they should be considered with this in mind. However, some of our findings are consistent with other educational research. Among these are teachers' skepticism about parental choice; teachers' reluctance to carry managerial duties in addition to teaching; and teachers' feelings of tension and competition in multiprogram schools. It seems reasonable to assume that districts that take these and other teachers' concerns into account when planning their implementation strategy for alternative education will enlist greater teacher support. Teachers' support is crucial, because they bear the final responsibility for making alternative education a classroom reality.

Chapter 3

ALTERNATIVES IN ALUM ROCK

THE SETTING

The Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is located in a largely residential area on the east side of San Jose, California. In 1976-77, Alum Rock enrolled 14,000 students in 19 elementary schools and six middle schools.[1] Fifty-seven percent of the students were Spanish-surnamed, 12 percent were black, and the remaining 31 percent belonged to other ethnic groups. At the time alternatives were first implemented in Alum Rock, the district's revenue base was one of the poorest in California (at the fourth percentile compared with all districts in the state).[2]

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VOUCHER DEMONSTRATION

The Alum Rock voucher demonstration began in the fall of 1972 and ended for all practical purposes in the spring of 1977. The United States Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) (and later the National Institute of Education) sponsored the demonstration to see what would happen if parents were given the opportunity to enroll their children in the public or private schools of their choice at public expense.[3] For a variety of reasons, this objective was never realized.[4] Instead, the voucher demonstration became a test of the idea of parent choice among alternative educational programs within the public schools.

The initial philosophy and rules of Alum Rock's "voucher" system were spelled out in the district's Transition Model Voucher Proposal.[5]

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[1] Excluding Mount Hamilton School, an isolated one-room school in the mountains east of San Jose.

[2] More information about the Alum Rock School District and its community can be found in Weiler et al. (1972a) and Bass (1978).

[3] Major arguments for and against the voucher idea can be found in Mecklenburger and Hostrop (1972) or La Noue (1972).

[4] Teachers played an important role in discouraging the entry of private schools in the demonstration.

[5] The proposal is reproduced in full in the Documentary Appendix to Weiler et al. (1974d).

Each participating school would offer at least two "alternative, distinct educational programs" called "mini-schools." Each mini-school was to contol its own curriculum, budget, and staffing. All students who applied to a program were to be admitted, subject only to the availability of classroom space in the building where the program was located. Program budgets were to be based on the number of students enrolled in each program.

It was agreed that each school's participation in the demonstration would be based on a majority vote of teachers. In 1972, teachers at six schools voted to join the demonstration. In 1973, teachers at another seven schools voted to join, and a fourteenth school joined in 1974.

At the peak of the demonstration in 1974-75, more than 9200 students were enrolled in 51 different mini-school programs. Some programs were content-oriented (e.g., "Bilingual/Bicultural," "Math-Science," "Careers Unlimited," or "World of Fine Arts"). Other mini-schools were process-oriented (e.g., "Traditional Plus," "Individual Learning," or "Learning by Doing"). Mini-schools varied in size from one classroom to 21 classrooms, with a median size of six classrooms.

In theory, each mini-school was to operate as an autonomous unit, and most mini-schools did have considerable autonomy during the early years of the demonstration. However, as the demonstration progressed, it became clear that the idea of mini-school autonomy was not always consistent with other district policies and commitments. A substantial erosion of program autonomy was evident by the end of the fourth year of the demonstration (1975-76).

In the spring of 1976, the Alum Rock Board of Trustees voted to reduce the number of alternative programs that were being offered within the district. Participating schools were told that they could offer at most three programs per school and were given the option of returning to a single school-wide program. At the same time, the regular schools were given the option of offering two or three programs each. Seven of the 14 participating schools chose to continue their mini-school form of organization in 1976-77, and they were joined by two regular schools that decided to offer multiple programs for the first time. These nine schools offered a total of 20 school-within-school alternatives during 1976-77.[6]

By 1977-78, only two schools in Alum Rock were still offering more than one educational program. The district's open enrollment policy continued, but the district's experiment with parent choice among distinctive educational programs had all but ended.

DISTRICT GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The official goals of the voucher demonstration were stated as follows:[7]

- To offer all parents in the demonstration area a range of choices for the education of their children. In particular, it is hoped that the *right* of educational choice presently available only to the affluent will be extended to the poor and middle-income sectors of the community [emphasis added].
- To allow schools to become more responsive to the needs of their communities and to involve parents more meaningfully in their decisionmaking processes.
- To stimulate parents to take a more active interest and become more involved in the education of their children.
- To improve the educational achievement of the participating students.
- To increase the level of parental satisfaction with the schools.

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[6] The district chose to call all its schools alternatives in 1976-77 and 1977-78. However, the single-program schools served mainly as neighborhood schools and did not seem to try very hard to differentiate themselves by program theme. In addition, only 25 percent of the teachers in single-program schools perceived themselves as teaching in an alternative program (Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 6). Consequently, only school-within-school programs have been treated as alternatives in this report.

[7] Transition Model Voucher Proposal (Weiler et al., 1974d, pp. 2-3).

The superintendent also saw the demonstration as a way to accomplish greater decentralization of decisionmaking within the district and to bring in several million federal dollars at a time of tight finances.

The district and OEO jointly agreed that the six "pilot" schools (with about 3800 students) would participate the first year, and that the district would try to expand the demonstration to include 8000 to 10,000 students the second year. No specific participation goals were established beyond the second year of the demonstration.

With ample federal funding, Alum Rock faced few financial constraints in implementing its version of alternatives. However, Alum Rock was significantly constrained by parents' concerns and lack of staff support.

Parents, for example, were unwilling to accept the district's initial proposal that schools be the units of choice, because they wanted to be sure they could find an acceptable program without having to leave their own neighborhood.[8] In response, the district agreed that each school would offer at least two distinct programs (called "mini-schools").

Further, the principals feared that the mini-schools could become so autonomous that the principals would have nothing to do. The district met this concern by keeping the language of the Transition Model Voucher Proposal vague on the division of responsibilities between principals and teachers.[9]

Meanwhile, teachers were concerned that the demonstration could affect their job security. In response, the Transition Model Voucher Proposal was amended to include guarantees that participating teachers would retain all tenure and seniority rights during the course of the demonstration and that OEO would pay up to one year's salary for any teacher displaced by the demonstration.

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[8] See Bridge and Blackman (1978) for an extended analysis of parents' responses to alternatives in Alum Rock and other districts.

[9] "We foresee the program *administration and staff* as exclusively responsible for their own policy and curriculum.... Most of the decisionmaking power must reside in the individual *schools and programs* which are competing for the child's support" [emphasis added]. Transition Model Voucher Proposal (Weiler et al., 1974d, pp. 13, 30).

Each of these decisions had important consequences for teachers as will be shown below.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Several features of Alum Rock's implementation policies have already been identified: the mini-school form of organization, the emphasis on mini-school autonomy, the use of outside funding, and so forth. The following sections discuss this implementation strategy in a more systematic way by examining Alum Rock's strategic choices in four main areas: (1) responsibility for program formation and management; (2) student admission and transfer policies; (3) financial support for alternatives; and (4) leadership support for alternatives.

Responsibility for Program Formation and Management

In Alum Rock, teachers had a substantial role in program decisionmaking. First, teachers voted on whether or not their schools would participate in the demonstration. Once they decided to participate, teachers took a large role in deciding how many and what kinds of programs would be offered. Teachers had almost complete control over curriculum decisions and considerable control over budget and personnel decisions as well. Contrary to the original design of the demonstration, teachers even influenced program size.

Deciding To Join the Demonstration. The rules of the demonstration stated that schools could enter the demonstration only if a majority of teachers voted to join. Also, individual teachers who did not agree with the majority decision could apply for positions in regular schools as they became available.

Principals played a major role in persuading their faculties to join,[10] but most teachers seem to have entered the demonstration willingly. In October 1972, 70 percent of the teachers in the original participating schools said they were "very pleased" or "somewhat pleased" to be participating in the demonstration.[11] In May 1973, 60 percent of the expansion voucher teachers said they were "very pleased" or "somewhat pleased" that their schools would be participating.

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[10] See Thomas (1978), pp. 21-23.

Program Formation. For schools electing alternative status, the process of deciding the number and theme of programs to be offered varied from school to school. In some schools, teachers were the sole decisionmakers. In other schools, the principal helped to decide which programs would be offered. In some schools, teachers developed a list of themes and submitted the list to parents. Generally, however, teachers played the dominant role in program formation. The district's central administration did not enter the decisionmaking process.

Program Management. The small size of most mini-schools made it uneconomical to employ nonteaching program managers, yet the mini-schools had many managerial tasks to perform, including the disposition of a large discretionary budget (see the section on financial support), the selection of new teachers and classroom aides, and community relations work. Thus, the mini-schools had to either appoint a teacher as a program coordinator, or make management decisions by committee.

Most mini-schools did choose one teacher to be the mini-school "coordinator."[12] The primary job of most mini-school coordinators was to act as a liaison person with the principal, other mini-schools, and district-level personnel. In some cases, the mini-school coordinator was also responsible for community relations. Rarely did the coordinator's responsibilities include the direct management of other teachers. At a few mini-schools, the teachers we talked with suggested that the coordinator did not have any definite responsibilities except to act as a figurehead.

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[11] Fall 1972 teacher survey.

[12] In 1975, Rand interviewed teachers at 24 of the district's 51 mini-schools. We found that 19 of the 24 had coordinators. Fifteen of these were selected by their peers or volunteered for the job. Two were selected by the school principal. At one mini-school, the coordinator's job was rotated among the mini-school teachers. One mini-school did not state how its coordinator was selected.

The Transition Model Voucher Proposal suggested that program coordinators might receive extra compensation for their responsibilities.[13] Some mini-school coordinators were paid for the extra hours they worked on program planning, but no salary differential per se was given to mini-school coordinators.

In summary, mini-school coordinators were usually full-time teachers who did not have special released time for program development and did not have a great deal of authority over other teachers in the program.

Student Admission and Transfer Policies

District policies governing student enrollments in alternative programs were in sharp contrast with Alum Rock's general policy of program autonomy. Instead of giving each program the freedom to decide how big it wanted to be (as would have been the case in a system of truly autonomous units), the district proposed to guarantee each child a place in the program of his or her choice. This meant that some teachers might have to be transferred to programs they did not prefer to teach in, and some programs might have to expand against their wishes. Thus, although teachers could determine the *number* of programs in their school, they had little control of the program size.

Student Admissions and Transfers during the Summer.

Most admissions and transfer activity in Alum Rock took place in the spring and summer preceding each school year. During the open enrollment period, programs were required to accept all applicants, subject only to limitations of building capacity. (Programs that wanted to admit students in excess of their building capacity could apply for funds to set up portable classrooms.)

The first year (1972) enrollments were kept open until the start of school in September. The second year enrollments were kept open only until May 25, so the schools and programs would have more time to plan their fall staffing. After the deadline, parents had to choose among those programs that were still accepting students.[14] The third year enrollment was again unrestricted until May 25, after which each school could choose between continuing open enrollment for its mini-schools until the building was filled, or setting a maximum enrollment for each mini-school based on the proportion of students who had applied to each program by May 25 ("linear projection"). Seven schools chose to continue open enrollments until they were full, and seven chose to use linear projection.[15]

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[13] Weiler et al., 1974d, Sec. III, 8.4.

Under Alum Rock's enrollment rules, the later students applied, the smaller was their choice of programs. However, the enrollment policies were so favorable to parents that almost all were able to enroll their children in their first-choice programs.

Student Admissions and Transfers during the School Year. When the demonstration began, the district's official policy was that parents should have the right to transfer their children at any time. Many teachers objected that their mini-schools could not plan adequately without some limits on student transfers during the year. Teachers at two of the six schools simply ignored the official policy and refused to admit any new students. The district continued to assert the principle of unlimited student transfer rights but conceded to the teachers by agreeing that mini-schools could close their enrollments "temporarily." At one point in the first year, only one alternative school was admitting newly enrolled children.

The controversy over student transfer rights continued during the second year of the demonstration. As in the first year, some mini-schools unilaterally closed their enrollments when they reached a predetermined desired size. The district continued to retain the open enrollment policy on the books but declined to enforce it.

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[14] Two programs won permission to set absolute limits on their enrollments. It was agreed that a lottery on May 25 would determine which applicants would be admitted to these programs. One school (Meyer) decided to stay open to all applicants and set up "satellites" --classrooms that would be located at other school sites, but which would nevertheless "belong" to Meyer School.

[15] The enrollment system was simplified somewhat by the elimination of lotteries and satelliting. Schools that wanted to accept students in excess of their building capacity could still apply for portable classrooms. (Note that this was a school-level decision, not a program-level decision. As such, it was probably influenced more by the principal's views than those of teachers.)

By the third year of the demonstration, student transfer rights during the school year were no longer an issue. The right of mini-schools to limit student transfers during the year became the district's de facto policy.

Financial Support for Alternatives

The mini-schools received nearly $200 per pupil in extra federal funding during 1972-73 and 1973-74, and about $100 per pupil during 1974-75 and 1975-76. Ten to 15 percent of this funding was earmarked for in-service education, mostly in the first two years of the demonstration.[16] The rest of the extra funding was discretionary. Mini-schools could hire aides, buy materials and supplies, go on field trips, or (in the first three years of the demonstration) hire some teachers and offer smaller classes.

After a state school finance reform bill was passed in 1974, both alternative and regular schools began to receive state compensatory education funds. (The alternative schools received about $75 per pupil.) These funds were allocated to the schools rather than to the mini-schools. This occurred, in part, because state regulations required a written plan from each educational unit that received funds. The district decided it would be easier to write school-wide plans than to create a separate plan for each mini-school.

Leadership Support for Alternatives

The leadership efforts of Superintendent William Jefferds were an important factor in the district's decision to initiate the voucher demonstration. Later, when the acting superintendent and board withdrew the district's commitment to the mini-school system, it quickly collapsed.

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[16] Teachers had insisted that OEO provide funds "to compensate participating personnel for the additional time which they spent in planning for the demonstration." (Weiler et al., 1974d, Sec. III, 8.5). Each school received about $30,000 for the first year and about $6000 the second year for this purpose.

Superintendent Jefferds' efforts to get the demonstration started are discussed in some detail by Weiler et al. (1974b) and Bass (1978). His success in winning teacher support for the experiment was due to both his excellent record of negotiation and consultation with teachers and his low-key, non-ideological manner of arguing for the district's participation in the demonstration. Leaving the strong advocacy role to others, the superintendent argued for vouchers as an idea worth trying as an experiment. It was clear to teachers that the superintendent was not advocating the dissolution of his own school system for the sake of the voucher idea, and that he was prepared to reconsider his support for the voucher idea if it should have significant negative consequences for teachers or any major interest group in Alum Rock.

In the fourth year of the demonstration, Superintendent Jefferds took a one-year leave of absence and Dr. Walter Symonds became Acting Superintendent. Neither Dr. Symonds nor the Board of Trustees were enthusiastic about the way the mini-schools were working. They felt there were too many programs that were not very different from each other, causing confusion among parents. Also, there was concern that the absence of a common curriculum was causing discontinuities in students' learning experiences when they transferred among programs. To simplify the system, the board ordered that no school could offer more than three programs in 1976-77, and that any school could return to a single, school-wide educational program if it wished. It was a clear signal that the district leadership no longer supported the mini-school concept.[17]

Our interviews with teachers suggest that many teachers saw this action as a signal that the experiment was over. Some teachers who would have liked to maintain their mini-schools gave in at this point, not wishing to fight for an idea the district no longer endorsed.

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[17] It is worth remembering that Superintendent Jefferds originally intended schools, not mini-schools, to be autonomous, competing units of his transition voucher model. He only accepted the mini-school idea because parents insisted that the system of parent choice must not conflict with the idea of neighborhood schools.

Summary

Alum Rock's policies for implementing alternatives included the following features:

- Teachers had a considerable influence over program formation and management decisions in the early years of the demonstration, but this influence declined as the demonstration progressed.
- The district's admission policies were sharply proconsumer. At first, mini-schools were expected to accommodate new students on demand. This idea was eventually dropped because of teacher opposition, but the mini-schools were still expected to reorganize each school year if necessary to accommodate all students who wanted to be admitted.
- Participating programs received ample discretionary funding in the first few years of the demonstration, but discretionary funds were gradually withdrawn.
- The superintendent's support for the demonstration tended to be relatively pragmatic. Leadership support for the demonstration was strong in the early years, but dropped sharply in the fourth year when leadership changed and federal funding was coming to an end.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVES

The preceding discussion of Alum Rock's implementation strategy provides some indications of teachers' responses to the demonstration, particularly in areas where teachers' responses had a direct influence on the way the demonstration was conducted. The following pages examine teachers' assessments of the main positive and negative features of the demonstration in 1974 (the second year of implementation). We have organized the responses into four main categories: advantages and disadvantages for students, advantages for parents,[18] advantages and disadvantages for teachers, and general advantages and disadvantages.

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[18] Teachers did not report any disadvantages for parents.

Table 3.1 shows that most teachers mentioned advantages for students or parents as positive features of the demonstration. The most frequently mentioned advantage for students was the better match between the curriculum and students' needs or interests. The most frequently mentioned advantage for parents was the availability of choice per se.

Fifty-seven percent of the alternative teachers (and 33 percent of the regular teachers) mentioned benefits to teachers. The most frequently mentioned benefit to teachers was increased teacher influence over educational decisions. Other benefits to teachers included greater autonomy, a sense of teamwork among mini-school teachers, and the stimulation of doing something different.

One general advantage of the demonstration was mentioned more often than any specific effects on students, parents, or teachers: the tremendous influx of money to the alternative schools and the increased staff, materials, and activities this money could buy. Sixty-one percent of the alternative teachers and 46 percent of the regular teachers suggested that the extra money was one of the main positive features of the demonstration.

Teachers' assessments of the disadvantages in the demonstration are summarized in Table 3.2. Among the drawbacks of the demonstration, 13 percent of the alternative teachers and 30 percent of the regular teachers expressed doubt that students would benefit from the demonstration. Some teachers noted the lack of educational continuity resulting from so many programs. Others doubted the ability of parents to make good program choices.

Almost all of the teachers mentioned disadvantages for teachers among the negative features of the demonstration. The most frequent complaint was that the demonstration had caused too much competition among teachers. Many teachers also noted that the demonstration created too much work for teachers, including too many meetings and too much administrative work. Other teacher complaints included assertions that the demonstration was being poorly administered, worries about the demonstration's effects on teachers' job security, and (for a few teachers) resentment at the increased role parents were playing in school decisions.

Table 3.1

WHAT ALUM ROCK TEACHERS LIKED ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

What do you think are the main positive features of the voucher demonstration?

Advantage	Percent Citing the Advantage	
	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers
Advantages for Students		
Students more interested/better able to fit education to students' needs	26	22
Students have a choice	15	19
One or more advantages for students	39	37
Advantages for Parents		
Parents have a choice	29	31
Parents more involved/have more input	25	16
One or more advantages for parents	48	43
Advantages for Teachers		
Increased teacher influence	33	10
Increased teacher autonomy	19	16
Increased teacher teamwork/less isolation	11	6
More growthful/stimulating for teachers	7	3
One or more advantages for teachers	57	33
General Advantages		
More money/benefits deriving from money	61	46
N	84	67

SOURCE: Winter 1974 teacher survey, question 6. The question was asked to a 25-percent sample of teachers (N=151). Up to 4 responses per teacher were coded. Only advantages cited by at least 5 percent of alternative or regular teachers are shown.

Table 3.2

WHAT ALUM ROCK TEACHERS DISLIKED ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

What do you think are the main negative features of the voucher demonstration?

Disadvantage	Percent Citing the Disadvantage	
	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers
Disadvantages for Students		
Less learning taking place/disorienting for students/lack of continuity	7	15
Parents are poorly informed/do not know what they are choosing	6	15
One or more disadvantages for students	13	30
Disadvantages for Teachers		
Too much competition among teachers	46	37
Takes too much time/too many meetings/too many administrative duties	42	34
Lack of direction/poor administration	27	18
Worry about enrollments/jobs	8	9
Too much parent power	4	8
One or more disadvantages for teachers	88	89
General Disadvantages		
Enrollment problems	16	10
Red tape/problems getting supplies	16	9
Waste of money	6	13
Transportation problems	8	3
Miscellaneous complaints	11	6
One or more general disadvantage	57	41
N	84	67

SOURCE: Winter 1974 teacher survey, question 7. The question was asked to a 25-percent sample of teachers (N=151). Up to 4 responses per teacher were coded.

Teachers also had a variety of general complaints about the demonstration. These included complaints about enrollment problems, red tape, and transportation problems, plus some sentiment that the demonstration was a waste of money.

Overall, these data suggest that teachers liked the demonstration primarily because it benefited students, increased choices for parents, increased influence of teachers, and provided extra money. However, many teachers disliked the demonstration because it fostered competition among teachers and required extra work from teachers. These perceptions are explored in greater detail below.

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Parents versus Students as the Intended Beneficiary

Teachers' open-ended comments about alternatives (see Table 3.1) indicated that teachers saw parents, students, or both as the intended beneficiary of alternatives. Since the primary rationale for the Alum Rock demonstration was to give parents more influence over the schools, it is not surprising that more teachers cited the demonstration's benefits to parents than cited its benefits to students.

Teachers had mixed opinions about whether the demonstration would improve (or had improved) the quality of education in Alum Rock (see Table 3.3). Most alternative teachers initially thought the quality of education in Alum Rock would be improved, but by the fourth year less than half thought an improvement in the quality of education had actually taken place. The teachers in the expansion alternative schools were somewhat less positive than original teachers regarding increased educational quality. By the end of the demonstration, half of the teachers perceived no changes in quality. Throughout the demonstration, the regular teachers thought the demonstration did not affect the quality of education in Alum Rock one way or the other. Among those regular teachers who thought it would change the quality of education,

Table 3.3

PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES IN ALUM ROCK
(In percent)

In general, how do you think the voucher demonstration will affect (has affected) the quality of education received by the children of Alum Rock?[a]

Group	Effect	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Original alternative teachers[b]	Increase quality	74	75	73	57	52
	Not change quality	25	20	21	34	41
	Decrease quality	1	4	6	9	7
		100	99	100	100	100
	N	113	113	146	132	120
Expansion alternative teachers[c]	Increase quality	52	52	45	40	36
	Not change quality	43	38	45	41	51
	Decrease quality	5	10	10	19	13
		100	100	100	100	100
	N	133	143	169	169	146
Regular teachers[d]	Increase quality	33	32	20	16	25
	Not change quality	51	47	58	49	50
	Decrease quality	16	21	22	35	25
		100	100	100	100	100
	N	150	158	174	178	206
All teachers	Increase quality	51	50	45	36	35
	Not change quality	41	37	42	42	48
	Decrease quality	8	13	13	22	17
		100	100	100	100	100
	N	396	414	499	479	472

SOURCES: Spring teacher surveys, 1973-1977.

[a] Wording varied slightly from year to year.

[b] Teachers at the six schools that joined in 1972-73.

[c] Teachers at the eight schools that joined in 1973-74 and 1974-75. (One of the eight schools closed in June 1976, and its teachers were transferred to a nonvoucher school.)

[d] Teachers at the 11 schools that never participated in the demonstration.

approximately the same number thought it would be for the better as thought it would be for the worse.[19]

Ability of Parents To Make Good Program Choices

When teachers were asked to identify the main negative features of the demonstration, only 10 percent volunteered that the quality of parents' program choices was a serious problem. However, when teachers were asked directly whether they felt parents knew enough to make good choices, many teachers said "No." In the first year of the demonstration, only 47 percent of the alternative teachers felt that parents had enough information to choose among the programs in their school. By the end of the second year, 64 percent of the alternative teachers thought parents had enough information, but 36 percent still felt they did not. In 1977, after a major reorganization of programs, only 18 percent of the teachers in Alum Rock felt confident that parents knew enough about the programs being offered to be able to make good choices (see Table 3.4).

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON TEACHERS

Teacher Control of the Work Environment

As noted previously, Alum Rock's implementation strategy gave teachers the primary responsibility for initiating, developing, and managing their own programs but tried to give parents the final word over program admission. The results for teachers were mixed. Most were able to teach in the programs they preferred, but some were assigned to less-preferred programs and many worried that they might be. Most teachers said their influence declined as the demonstration progressed, and teachers were never able to limit enrollments as they desired.

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[19] An analysis of teachers' initial attitudes toward the demonstration showed only minor differences in attitude among teachers of different ages, ethnic groups, and union affiliations. Teachers with more than 20 years of experience were the most skeptical group (Weiler et al. (1974), pp. 146-149).

Table 3.4

TEACHERS' CONFIDENCE IN PARENTS' PROGRAM CHOICES IN ALUM ROCK

(In percent)

Do you think parents had enough information to choose among programs in your school?

Response	Alternative Teachers, Fall 1972	Alternative Teachers, Spring 1974
Yes	47	64
No	53	36
	100	100
N	97	239

Do you think most parents know enough about the educational programs being offered in your district to be able to make good program choices for their children?

Response	Former Alternative Teachers, Spring 1977	Former Regular Teachers, Spring 1977
Yes	18	13
No	66	69
Do not know	16	18
	100	100
N	267	209

SOURCES: Fall 1972 teacher survey, question 24; Spring 1974 teacher survey, question 22; Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 4.

Choice. At the start of the demonstration, 76 percent of the alternative teachers indicated that they were teaching in their first-choice program, while 17 percent indicated that they would prefer to teach elsewhere. Seven percent said they were indifferent about their program assignment (Spring 1972 teacher survey, question 6). Thus, the system of parent choice in Alum Rock allowed most teachers to have the program assignments they preferred and forced only a minority into programs they would not have chosen freely. (Teacher dissatisfaction with program assignments was only 5 to 10 percent higher for alternative teachers than for regular teachers.) However, many teachers who were able to teach in the programs they liked still worried that they might be forced to teach elsewhere if enrollments dwindled. Forty-nine percent of the teachers in 1975 and 39 percent in 1976 said their mini-schools had worried whether they would attract enough students to avoid forced program transfers.[20]

Voice. The demonstration brought teachers much more influence over curriculum, budget, and staffing decisions than they had previously experienced. In the second year, for example:

- 87 percent of the alternative teachers felt they had "a lot" of influence over curriculum decisions;
- 70 percent felt they had a lot of influence over budget decisions; and
- 57 percent felt they had a lot of influence over teacher hiring decisions.[21]

Most teachers liked their increased influence over program decisions. At the end of the first year, 67 percent of the alternative teachers indicated that "more teacher authority" was one of the main advantages of the demonstration.[22] The following year, 68 percent of the alternative teachers said that teacher influence on school policy had increased, and 85 percent of these teachers felt the increase was a change for the better.[23]

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[20] Spring 1975 teacher survey, question 35; Spring 1976 teacher survey, question 29.

[21] Spring 1974 teacher survey, question 20.

[22] Spring 1973 teacher survey, question 93.

Greater influence over program decisions was not without its price, however. Many teachers did not appreciate the time it took to make the curriculum, budget, and staffing decisions that had been turned over to them. This aspect of the mini-school system is discussed more thoroughly below under the heading "Workload."

As the end of the demonstration neared, mini-school autonomy became more restricted. In the fourth year of the demonstration, only 58 percent of the teachers felt they had a lot of influence over curriculum decisions; 29 percent felt they had a lot of influence over budget decisions; and 17 percent felt they had a lot of influence over hiring decisions.[24] The fact that teachers experienced less and less influence over program decisions as the demonstration progressed is one of several reasons for the demise of the mini-schools. In our follow-up interviews with teachers in 1977, several said they had voted to return to a single-school form of organization because the mini-schools controlled so little anyway.

One aspect of program decisionmaking over which teachers never felt they had enough voice was the determination of program size. The district's initial goal was to allow students to enter or leave programs on demand. This goal was so unpopular with teachers that the district never enforced students' enrollment and transfer rights during the year. However, the district still insisted that all students be allowed to enroll in their first-choice programs each fall.

Teachers' objections to the district's policies on student admissions and transfers included the following:

- It was not easy to accommodate students except in multiples of 30, the average class size. Accepting 15 new students, for example, into a program with 90 students and 3 teachers would require the program either to increase its average class size to 35 or to hire a new teacher and drop its average class size to 26. (For a variety of reasons the district did not encourage either of these options.)

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[24] Spring 1974 teacher survey, question 9b.

[25] Spring 1976 teacher survey, question 23.

- It was difficult to plan for programs without knowing how many students would be enrolled from week to week.[25]
- Teachers in some programs felt they did not have enough control over the selection of new teachers to be able to preserve the distinctive character of their program if it grew.
- Some teachers felt that smallness itself was an important part of their program and that the program would become qualitatively different if it grew.
- Some teachers did not want to go through the social readjustments necessary to accommodate new teachers into their programs.
- Teachers in some programs wanted a waiting list for their programs so that students who left during the course of the year could be readily replaced.

Some of these objections might well be dismissed as trivial, but others represented real dilemmas for the mini-schools. The district's policy that programs must accept all applicants created particular problems for successful popular programs that were expected to maintain program integrity while accommodating an increasing and unpredictable number of students and staff.

Autonomy. A system of alternatives can enhance or detract from teachers' classroom autonomy. If the alternative programs are loosely structured, teachers may feel that they have more autonomy under alternatives. If the system is one in which programs are highly prescriptive about teachers' classroom behavior, teachers may feel they have less autonomy than before.

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[25] This was particularly so under the district's "fine-tuned" budget system that based program income on daily enrollments. If a program committed its projected income early in the school year and its enrollment subsequently declined, it would be in financial trouble. (This fine-tuned system was abandoned as impractical in the fourth year of the demonstration.)

In Alum Rock, about half of the alternative teachers said they had experienced an increased sense of autonomy since the beginning of the demonstration; about a third felt that teacher autonomy had stayed the same; about a sixth felt teacher autonomy had decreased. Because regular teachers reported very similar experiences in their schools, it would appear that the demonstration itself did not have a consistent effect on teacher autonomy.[26]

Workload

Given the sharp increase in teacher influence over program decisions, it is not surprising that most teachers reported an increase in their workload as well. In the spring of 1973, 51 percent of the original alternative teachers reported working at least six more hours per week than they had the previous year. In the winter of 1974, 43 percent of the original alternative teachers and 40 percent of the expansion teachers felt that the extra effort required by the demonstration was one of its main negative features. Twenty-two percent of the teachers specifically complained about their new administrative and budgeting duties. This disadvantage of the teacher-controlled model is illustrated by several teachers' comments:

> New teachers have to make many more decisions for themselves such as budgetary decisions, hiring decisions, staffing decisions, and material decisions. Above all, much more control of the finances that are put into the school and how they will be spent. This means that they have had to spend a lot more time out of the classroom, especially in planning, organization, and evaluation of the mini-school.
>
> Teachers are overworked and underpaid. There are meetings before school and after school that we aren't getting paid for. Teachers are handling a lot of things that the administrators are getting paid for. The principal gets [more than teachers] and we are doing his job and should be paid for it rather than have the principal get paid for something he isn't doing.

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[26] Annual teacher surveys, 1974-1977.

The significance of these remarks is highlighted when compared with the comments of teachers in other districts: In no other site did teachers complain as much about the extra workload, and in no other site did so many teachers have so much responsibility for managerial decisionmaking.

Teacher-Peer Relations

In Alum Rock, tension between programs was seen as a major problem by about a third of the alternative teachers in 1975 and 1976. Only in the fifth year of the demonstration (1976-77) did tension among programs drop appreciably.[27] The perception of tension as a problem varied significantly from school to school. At three schools in 1975, less than 20 percent of the teachers felt tension among programs was a major problem. At four schools, more than half of the teachers felt it was a major problem.

Tension among programs was partly due to the fact that the programs were competing for students. In addition, some mini-schools found themselves competing with one another for school resources. For example, a large mini-school in one school unilaterally appropriated some equipment that the other mini-schools thought should be shared, and there was a long fight before a decision was finally made to share the equipment among all programs. At another school, several teachers felt that one program was getting preferential treatment from the principal, including the opportunity for teachers to get extra work assignments that were paid for out of school funds.

In some schools, tension among programs was also exacerbated by status competition. Some teachers liked to make comparisons among programs and how they were viewed by the community. Occasionally teachers and students were heard making disparaging remarks about other mini-schools. At one school, a popular mini-school got so much publicity from the news media that the other teachers were resentful.

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[27] Spring 1975 teacher survey, question 8a; Spring 1976 teacher survey, question 9a; Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 21a.

The fact that tension among programs was not a serious problem at every multiprogram school suggests that it can be moderated. In fact, a related report (Thomas, 1978) suggests that the principal can play an important part in moderating tension among programs in multiprogram schools. Still, the existence of different educational programs under the same roof seems to invoke tension among teachers. This may explain why 52 percent of the teachers in Alum Rock said they preferred a single educational program at their school, while 37 percent preferred multiprogram schools.[28]

Distribution of District Resources

Alternative Teachers. Sixty-two percent of the alternative teachers we surveyed in 1974 reported that the flow of federal funds into their schools was one of the main positive features of the demonstration. In fact, when they were asked later the same year whether they agreed or disagreed that "All things considered, the major benefit of the voucher system is the additional money received by schools in the district," 84 percent agreed.[29] Thus, the funding was an important incentive in getting teachers to join the demonstration.

Teachers specifically requested funds for in-service training to support program development. The Transition Model Voucher Proposal said, "We are committed to the notion that adequate funding for in-service training is essential for the development of real alternatives in the six pilot schools during the first year. Funding for alternatives should be provided as a separate category of expense, and should not be commingled with voucher revenues. We propose that OEO provide funds to support an in-service program to develop alternatives."[30] As noted earlier, OEO did provide an in-service allowance for each voucher school.

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[28] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 11. The distributions of opinion among former voucher teachers and former nonvoucher teachers were virtually identical on this issue.

[29] Spring 1974 teacher survey, question 8b.

[30] Weiler et al., 1974d, Sec. III, 7.

We have already alluded to the competition for resources among programs in the same building. In 1975, 32 percent of the teachers felt that fairness in allocating discretionary funds had been a major problem that year, and 26 percent of the teachers felt it was a major problem in 1976.[31] Thus, teachers were not primarily concerned that participating schools got more than regular schools, but rather that some programs seemed to be getting more than others. These findings may have been exacerbated by the mini-school form of organization, where differences in resource use were quite visible.

Regular Teachers. In the Winter 1974 teacher survey, 48 percent of the regular teachers saw the increased funding for participating schools as one of the main positive features of the demonstration. Thirteen percent felt the extra expenditures were a waste of money, but only 1 percent felt the distribution of funds to participating schools was unfair. In our interviews with the leaders of teacher organizations in Alum Rock, the subsidization was not mentioned as a concern of regular teachers.

The following factors may help explain why regular teachers showed so little concern about the subsidization of alternatives in Alum Rock:

- The funding source for alternatives was external to the district.
- Alternative and regular teachers were housed separately, inhibiting direct comparisons of the resources allocated to alternative and regular programs.
- During most of the demonstration, there was adequate funding for both types of schools.

Net Effect on Teachers

Thus far, the data indicate that the demonstration brought with it both advantages and disadvantages for teachers. The increased resources, teacher influence, freedom to be creative, and teamwork had to be balanced against the unpleasantness of competition, the long work days, and other problems. How did these factors balance out? Our data show that most of the original alternative teachers felt the demonstration had a net positive effect on teachers, but most expansion and regular teachers felt the demonstration had a net negative effect on teachers (see Table 3.5).

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[31] Spring 1975 teacher survey, question 8e; Spring 1976 teacher survey, question 9e.

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES

The previous analyses have shown that alternative, expansion, and regular teachers differed in their support of alternative education. Teachers' perceptions of the effects of alternatives on students (Table 3.3) and teachers (Table 3.5) showed the following patterns:

- Teachers in the six original participating schools were the most enthusiastic toward alternatives. During the first three years of the demonstration, about 75 percent of these teachers felt it would increase the quality of education in the district, and almost none felt the quality of education would decline. In the fourth and fifth years, about 55 percent of this group felt the quality of education had increased, and less than 10 percent felt it had declined. Most of the teachers in the original alternative schools also felt that the demonstration had a net positive effect on teachers, although the proportion who felt this way declined to 50 percent in the fifth year. The biggest sign of concern about the demonstration was the 25 to 29 percent of teachers who felt the demonstration had a negative effect on teachers.
- Teachers in the eight expansion schools were, as a group, less enthusiastic about the district's system of alternatives than those who had joined in the first year. At the start of the demonstration, about 50 percent of these teachers felt it would increase the quality of education in the district, but this percentage declined to 36 by the fifth year of the demonstration. As many as half of the expansion teachers felt the demonstration would not change the quality of education in

Table 3.5

PERCEIVED NET EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES ON TEACHERS IN ALUM ROCK

(In percent)

Overall, has the demonstration had a positive effect, a negative effect, or no effect on teachers?[a]

Effect	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Teachers in six original participating schools					
Positive effect	70	66	66	59	50
No effect	2	5	5	16	21
Negative effect	28	29	29	25	28
	100	100	100	100	100[b]
N	109	107	140	131	117
Teachers in eight expansion schools[c]					
Positive effect		31	34	34	37
No effect	(d)	7	8	8	24
Negative effect		62	58	57	39
		100	100	100	100
N		137	160	169	148
Teachers in eleven regular schools[e]					
Positive effect	(d)	30	19	15	28
No effect		8	25	17	27
Negative effect		62	56	68	45
		100	100	100	100
N		148	149	180	201

SOURCES: Spring 1973 teacher survey, question 11b; Spring 1974 teacher survey, question 2b; Spring 1975 teacher survey, question 2b; Spring 1976 teacher survey, question 3; Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 2.

[a] Wording varied slightly from year to year.

[b] Rounding error.

[c] Seven schools entered in 1973-74, one in 1974-75. One of the eight schools closed at the end of 1975-76, and its teachers were transferred to a regular school.

[d] Not available.

[e] Ten schools in 1972-73. (One regular school opened in 1973-74.)

the district, and 5 to 19 percent felt the quality of education would decline or had declined. The expansion teachers were also notably less pleased with the demonstration's effect on teachers: Most felt it had a negative effect on teachers (until the fifth year, when the demonstration was effectively over).

- Teachers in the eleven regular schools were the least enthusiastic about the demonstration. About 25 percent felt the demonstration would improve the quality of education in the district, about 50 percent felt it would not change, and about 25 percent felt it would decline. In addition, most regular teachers felt the demonstration had a negative effect on teachers.

Another important factor in teachers' overall support for alternatives is their perception of parental choice. The guiding philosophy of the Alum Rock voucher demonstration was that parents had the right to make educational choices for their children. However, we found that teachers were generally skeptical about parents' ability to make good program choices, although alternative teachers had more confidence in parental choice than did other teachers (see Table 3.4). Given these results, it is not surprising to find that teachers in the original alternative schools showed more support for the idea of parent choice than teachers in the expansion schools, and that the lowest level of support for the idea of parent choice would be found among regular teachers (see Table 3.6). In addition, these data show a general decline in the degree of support for parent choice among all teacher groups over the course of the demonstration.

SUMMARY

Teachers' overall support for alternatives in Alum Rock varied substantially from school to school and from year to year during the course of the demonstration. Not surprisingly, teachers who joined the demonstration in its first year expressed more positive attitudes toward the idea of parent choice than teachers who joined the

Table 3.6

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES IN ALUM ROCK

All things considered, do you think giving parents a choice among different types of programs for their children is a good idea or not?

Rating	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Teachers in six original alternative schools					
Good idea or very good idea	87	84	81	66	63
Fair idea	11	15	16	27	29
Poor or very poor idea	2	1	3	7	7
	100	100	100	100	100[a]
N	111	116	147	134	123
Teachers in eight expansion schools[b]					
Good or very good idea		74	70	61	56
Fair idea	(c)	19	23	27	26
Poor or very poor idea		7	7	12	18
		100	100	100	100
N		147	171	172	147
Teachers in eleven regular schools[d]					
Good or very good idea		55	50	41	40
Fair idea	(c)	36	34	38	41
Poor or very poor idea		9	16	21	19
		100	100	100	100
N		166	189	190	209

SOURCES: Spring 1973 teacher survey, question 17; Spring 1974 teacher survey, question 3; Spring 1975 teacher survey, question 3; Spring 1976 teacher survey, question 4; Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 3.

[a] Rounding error.

[b] Seven schools entered in 1973-74, one in 1974-75. One of the eight schools closed at the end of 1975-76, and its teachers were transferred to a regular school.

[c] Not available.

[d] Ten schools in 1972-73. (One regular school opened in 1973-74.)

demonstration later or who never joined the demonstration. For all three groups of teachers, support for alternatives diminished as the demonstration progressed.

Most teachers saw the system of alternatives as beneficial for parents, as well as capable of improving the district's quality of education. Many teachers were concerned that parents did not know enough about the alternative programs to make good choices. However, at the peak of the demonstration, most alternative teachers thought that parents had enough knowledge to make choices among programs. When the system returned to a separate-school form of organization in 1977, only about 15 percent of the teachers remained confident in parents' ability to make good choices.

Teachers were divided in their assessments of the demonstration's effects on teachers. At the end of the first year of the demonstration, 70 percent of the original alternative teachers thought the demonstration had a positive effect on teachers, but 28 percent felt it had a negative effect. By the fifth year, when the demonstration had effectively ended, only 50 percent of the original teachers in the six original alternative schools responded positively, and 28 percent still felt it had harmed teachers. Expansion teachers were more negative than positive in their assessment of the demonstration's effect on teachers, even in their first year of participation. Most regular teachers expressed negative sentiments.

Teachers named the increased influence they were given over curriculum, budget, and staffing decisions as the most important positive effects of the demonstration on teachers. Important negative effects included tension among programs, feelings of decreased job security (even though not one teacher lost a job because of the demonstration), and feelings that resource distribution among mini-schools was inequitable. Teachers were also concerned about the amount of time and effort required to make program decisions and the district's idea that the program should accommodate all applicants.

Chapter 4

ALTERNATIVES IN MINNEAPOLIS

THE SETTING

Minneapolis is a city of 400,000 in a metropolitan area of nearly two million people. Most of the population is middle class and of northern European descent. In 1970, 4 percent of Minneapolis' population was black and 2 percent was "other minority race" (predominantly American Indian).

In the 1976-77 school year, the Minneapolis Public Schools enrolled 52,400 students in 82 schools (10 high schools, 12 junior high schools, and 60 elementary schools). Twenty-three percent of the student population were classified as "minority" students.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVES IN MINNEAPOLIS

Alternatives in Minneapolis began in 1971 with a federally funded Experimental Schools project called Southeast Alternatives (SEA). SEA focused on a cluster of four schools enrolling 2500 students. The purpose of the program was to bring about "comprehensive change" in the schools by creating educational choices.

It was decided that each of the three elementary schools in the southeastern area would offer a different educational program. All the schools would try to teach the same basic elementary curriculum, but the "contemporary" program would offer a traditional approach to teaching with self-contained classes for each grade level; the "continuous progress" program would offer ungraded team-taught classes; and the "open" program would offer more opportunity for self-direction and choice over students' learning activities. In addition, a new K-12 "free school" was to be created for parents whose educational philosophy was even more "open" than the open school.

Teachers were given the option of picking whichever program they wanted to participate in, and extensive training and planning sessions, paid for with federal funds, formed the basis for each school's program.

In March 1973, toward the end of SEA's second year, the Minneapolis School Board decided to implement alternatives city-wide (at least at the elementary level) by September 1976. The superintendent hoped to use alternatives to bring about educational innovation throughout the district. The superintendent and board members also hoped that alternatives would help Minneapolis comply with a court order to desegregate.

Throughout the district, elementary schools were clustered on the basis of ethnicity, and the administrators in each cluster were given the responsibility of deciding which schools in each cluster would offer which programs. There was no specific requirement that the programs be the same types as those that were originally offered in SEA, but all the alternatives offered through 1976-77 were based on the three main SEA models (contemporary, continuous progress, and open).

In 1976-77, we found that 33 of the district's 60 elementary schools were actively involved in alternatives. Of these, 9 were "contemporary," 11 were "continuous progress," 6 were "open" or "modified open," and one was a "free school." Six schools offered a combination of programs.

Alternatives were distributed across all administrative areas, but most alternative programs were nearer the business district. Eighty-six percent of the schools nearest the business district were actively involved with alternatives, while only 31 percent of the suburban schools were similarly involved. This relationship can be explained by the more active role of central-city schools in the district's desegregation efforts.

DISTRICT GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

Minneapolis' involvement with alternatives had two distinct phases: (1) the implementation of SEA beginning in 1971, and (2) the expansion of alternatives throughout the city beginning in 1973. The district had somewhat different goals and faced somewhat different constraints during these two phases.

The district's 1971 decision to implement SEA was made with four primary goals in mind:

- The district had an opportunity to obtain several million dollars in federal funding over a five-year period.
- SEA would help to satisfy a vocal group of parents in the southeastern area who were pressuring the district for more "open" forms of education.
- SEA promised to ease the process of desegregation at two schools in the southeastern area that were being paired.
- The superintendent saw SEA as a potential model for change throughout the district.

The district faced relatively few political or resource constraints in implementing SEA. The availability of massive external funding made the project highly attractive to the staff and parents who were directly involved without demanding any sacrifices from the remaining schools in the district.

In 1973 the district decided to expand alternatives whether or not federal funding was forthcoming. The district's financial position was strong enough in 1973 that it could still promise extra funding for alternative programs without pinching resources at the uninvolved schools. In addition, the desegregation court order eliminated one significant constraint on the implementation of alternatives: The district did not have to fight the neighborhood school issue and could create school-sized alternatives if it wished. (Each of the other districts we studied were forced by community sentiment to adopt a school-within-school form of organization for most alternatives.)

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Responsibility for Program Formation and Management

Program Initiation. The superintendent picked the schools that were to participate in Minneapolis' SEA experiment. Teachers played a part in deciding where programs would be located, but the administration played the dominant role.

When the board voted to expand the system of alternatives throughout Minneapolis, much of the planning was delegated to "clusters" of schools throughout the district that were responsible for desegregating themselves. A great deal of planning activity usually took place before program themes and locations were established. Often, parents and teachers were polled to find out what kinds of programs they would like to see. The final choices, however, were made by the area superintendents and principals. These choices were based not only on what parents and teachers wanted, but also on where programs should be located so they would further the district's desegregation efforts and the kinds of programs the principals wanted to oversee.

In most cases, the administrators in Minneapolis chose to organize alternatives as separate schools. In 1976-77, 27 of the 33 schools that offered alternatives were single-program schools.

Program Development and Management. Compared with Alum Rock, Minneapolis gave much less of the responsibility for program development and management to full-time classroom teachers. In the separate-school programs, principals were responsible for most of the day-to-day program management. In addition, about one-third of the separate-school programs and about half of the school-within-school programs had full-time resource teachers or program coordinators who were partially responsible for curriculum development. Of course, teachers still had the responsibility for classroom-level implementation of their alternative programs, and this responsibility was not an easy one in view of the types of programs that were being created. However, the district's strategy of replicating established programs rather than continually developing new alternatives made it possible for new teachers to rely on experienced teachers for program ideas and guidance.

Student Admission and Transfer Policies

The rules governing student admissions and transfers among programs were relatively proconsumer, although not as much as in Alum Rock. The district tried to place children in programs they and their parents preferred, and the district did not hesitate to reassign teachers if the demand for a program exceeded the supply of teachers who wanted to teach in it. However, consumer choice was never treated as an absolute right to be provided instantly and without question.

Some programs had to limit their enrollments because they did not have the physical facilities to accommodate all applicants, and some students were denied admission to their first-choice programs because of the district's need to maintain racial balance. In addition, principals had a degree of personal discretion over student admissions and transfers because the district required interschool transfers to have the approval of both sending and receiving principals, subject to appeal. In some schools, even teachers had a voice in students' program assignments. Some schools allowed students to transfer only if the teacher, parent(s), and student all agreed that the student would be better off in a different program. In one multiprogram school we visited, the staff actually assigned students to programs, although "always with parent consent."

Financial Support for Alternatives

The four original SEA schools received a total of $6.5 million in federal funds between 1971 and 1976. This amounted to more than $500 of extra funding per student per year to get alternatives started (Morley, 1976, p. 30). The money was spent for a great variety of purposes: full-time program coordinators at some schools, full-time counselors at all schools, full-time community resource coordinators, teacher aides, new instructional materials, internal evaluators, classroom remodeling, special consultants, in-service training, teacher travel, computer-assisted instruction, public information, and a resource center for teachers. Obviously the district could not lavish such resources on each new alternative school it created, but most of the second generation of alternatives in Minneapolis did receive some resources above the norm.

Almost all of the alternative programs we visited or surveyed reported that extra funds had been spent for teacher training and staff development. Eighty-two percent of the alternative teachers said the district had sponsored special in-service classes or workshops to prepare them for working in their present programs. Another 70 percent said they had been given released time to observe in other classrooms, and 67 percent said they had received assistance from specialists or consultants in their classrooms. Special training was especially evident among the open teachers. In addition to the kinds of training received by other alternative teachers, 49 percent of the open teachers said they had interned in other classrooms, and 41 percent said they had taken special college or university courses to help prepare them for their program assignments.[1]

About half of the alternative programs we visited reported that they had extra assigned staff because of their alternative status. Extra staff was reported by six of seven open programs, five of nine continuous progress programs, and two of six contemporary programs. Extra staff were used as resource teachers, program coordinators, or to reduce class size. One school hired a full-time counselor with its supplementary funding, and one hired classroom aides.

The district's subsidies for its alternative programs could be reduced or discontinued in the future because of the district's growing financial problems. Superintendent Arveson has said that he wants to find a way to fund alternatives at the same level as regular programs.[2] In the 1976-77 budget deliberations, the district's $400,000 special allocation for alternatives was deleted, then reinstated after strong lobbying by alternative parents. It is almost certain that the district's subsidies for alternatives will be under continued examination and will need strong justification if they are to be maintained.

Leadership Support for Alternatives

Interviewees throughout Minneapolis cited the leadership efforts of Superintendent John Davis as a critical factor in the success of alternatives. He worked hard to make alternatives a high-priority item in the district and to convince his board, the public, and school personnel that alternatives were an important asset to the city.

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[1] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 33. Of the various types of training that were offered, teachers said they found interning and observing in other alternative classrooms the most valuable (Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 34).

[2] Personal interview, November 1976.

When SEA was initiated in 1971, the superintendent did not talk much about alternatives as a district-wide need. Instead, he tried to start alternative schools in a "relatively secluded" way, then export their successes to other parts of the city, and finally back to the pioneer schools as "an integral part of the school system." ("The leadership view was that comprehensive change comes about best when talked about least." Morley, 1976, p. 57.)

This stance was probably a prudent one, because at first there was little board support for the idea of exporting alternatives throughout Minneapolis. When one board member proposed in early 1972 that alternatives be extended to other areas of the district, his proposal was met with "an overwhelming torrent of abuse" and was quickly dropped (Bass, 1978). However, the superintendent kept the board informed of the progress on SEA, and in March 1973, the following resolution was adopted unanimously by the board:

> The administration is directed to commence feasibility studies and planning necessary to implement a citywide program for educational choices at grades K through 6, with a goal of full implementation by September 1976.... While the concept of the Southeast Alternatives should serve as a model, the precise form of the program shall be developed during the planning period. Any plan must be consistent with desegregation/integration programs adopted by the Minneapolis Board of Education.

The board member who introduced the resolution argued for alternatives on the grounds that they would reduce disagreements and tensions between the city's conservative and liberal elements, thereby creating greater satisfaction with the schools on the part of students, parents, and teachers. The superintendent, when asked about his feelings toward the alternatives, replied that he and his colleagues were committed to the creation of choice and option in the school district--a variety of learning processes, a variety of learning styles.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVES

In the spring of 1977, teachers from 20 alternative schools in Minneapolis were asked to describe in their own words the chief advantages and disadvantages of alternatives. A synopsis of what they said is shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

To most alternative teachers the primary advantages of alternatives lay in their benefits to the consumer. Seventy-six percent of the respondents felt alternatives offered advantages for students, and 32 percent felt that alternatives offered advantages for parents. The most frequently mentioned argument for alternatives was that they met the differing educational needs of students.

Fifteen percent of the teachers observed that alternatives benefited teachers by giving them more choice or opportunity to pursue their preferred style of teaching.

The most frequently mentioned disadvantage of alternatives was the teachers' perception that parents were not making good program choices. Fully 27 percent of the alternative teachers volunteered this complaint. An additional 18 percent of the alternative teachers expressed the concern that students' learning of basic skills was suffering under alternatives.

Forty-three percent of the teachers mentioned one or more ways alternatives were disadvantageous to teachers. Eleven percent felt alternatives were too much work for teachers. Nine percent felt alternatives caused too much competition among teachers. Eight percent complained that teachers did not have enough choice of programs. Eight percent complained that alternatives created too much confusion, and five percent said teachers felt threatened by alternatives. Seventeen percent of the teachers felt alternatives were not getting enough money to do their job right.

The following sections examine teachers' perceptions of the effects of alternatives in greater detail.

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Parents versus Students as the Intended Beneficiary

Compared with their counterparts in Alum Rock, alternative teachers in Minneapolis were much more likely to see the overall value of alternatives in terms of advantages for children: 76 percent mentioned

Table 4.1

WHAT MINNEAPOLIS TEACHERS LIKED ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

What do you see as the chief advantages of educational alternatives in your district?

Advantage	Percent of Teachers Citing the Advantage			
	Contemporary Teachers	Continuous Progress Teachers	Open Teachers	All Alternative Teachers[a]
	Advantages for Students			
Gives students a choice	34	14	32	22
Meets differing needs	44	55	41	50
Students more interested	10	12	11	11
One or more advantages for students	80	75	73	76
	Advantages for Parents			
Gives parents a choice	34	24	25	26
Parents more involved/ satisfied	10	14	7	11
Other advantages for parents	--	--	2	--
One or more advantages for parents	42	29	34	32
	Advantages for Teachers			
Gives teachers a choice	15	14	23	15
Other advantages for teachers	--	2	--	1
One or more advantages for teachers	15	15	23	16
	General Advantages			
Gives people a choice	5	4	5	4
Aids desegregation	2	1	5	2
Other general advantages	2	6	4	5
One or more general advantages	7	10	9	9
N	41	80	56	177

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 53. Up to three responses per teacher were coded.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

Table 4.2

WHAT MINNEAPOLIS TEACHERS DISLIKED ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

What do you see as the chief disadvantages of alternatives?

Disadvantage	Percent of Teachers Citing the Disadvantage			
	Contemporary Teachers	Continuous Progress Teachers	Open Teachers	All Alternative Teachers[a]
Disadvantages for Students				
Parents do not make good program choices	29	27	22	27
Learning of basic skills suffers	19	18	16	18
Other disadvantages for students	10	1	2	4
One or more disadvantages for students	50	47	36	46
Disadvantages for Teachers				
Too much work	2	14	16	11
Too much competition	14	8	4	9
Teachers have no choice	7	10	6	8
Teachers feel threatened	14	--	6	5
Too much confusion	10	4	13	8
One or more disadvantages for teachers	57	37	40	43
General Disadvantages				
Inadequate resources for alternatives	7	23	14	17
Other general disadvantages	24	19	26	22
One or more general disadvantages	29	37	38	34
N	42	73	55	170

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 54. Up to three responses per teacher were coded.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

advantages for students, while 32 percent mentioned advantages for parents.

Perhaps the reason so many Minneapolis teachers saw alternatives as an educational innovation rather than a political innovation was the way Superintendent John Davis presented and defended the concept of educational alternatives. When he argued on behalf of parent choice, it was almost always on the grounds that different children had different learning styles and needs.

When teachers were asked directly whether alternatives had affected the quality of education in Minneapolis, most continuous progress and open teachers felt that alternatives had increased the quality of education in the district, whereas the response for most contemporary teachers was that alternatives had not changed the quality of education in the district (see Table 4.3).[3]

Ability of Parents To Make Good Program Choices

In their open-ended comments about alternatives, 27 percent of the Minneapolis alternative teachers were concerned that parents were not making good program choices for their children (see Table 4.2). When the same teachers were asked directly whether most parents knew enough to make good choices, 58 percent said "No." Even open teachers, the group most optimistic about parents' ability to make good program choices, were highly skeptical when asked directly about parental choice (see Table 4.4).

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON TEACHERS

In the spring of 1977, most Minneapolis alternative teachers in all programs felt that alternatives were having a positive effect on teachers (see Table 4.5). However, a significant minority (27 percent

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[3] We have data for only 2 or the 25 "contemporary" schools that were peripherally involved in alternatives. This is not an adequate base for generalization, but we did find that the attitudes of teachers in these two schools were similar to the attitudes of contemporary teachers in schools that were actively involved in alternatives.

Table 4.3

PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES IN MINNEAPOLIS (In percent)

In general, how do you think the existence of alternatives has affected the quality of education received by the children of your district?

Effect	Contemporary Teachers	Continuous Progress Teachers	Open Teachers	All Alternative Teachers[a]	Regular Teachers[b]
Positive effect	39	62	79	59	44
No effect	44	30	6	30	22
Negative effect	17	8	15	11	33
N	42	73	55	170	

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 1.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Based on data from only two schools; should be treated as highly tentative.

Table 4.4

TEACHERS' CONFIDENCE IN PARENTS' PROGRAM CHOICES IN MINNEAPOLIS (In percent)

Do you think most parents know enough about the educational programs being offered in your district to be able to make good program choices for their children?

Response	Contemporary Teachers	Continuous Progress Teachers	Open Teachers	All Alternative Teachers[a]	Regular Teachers[b]
Yes	22	23	40	25	22
No	65	60	40	58	67
Do not know	13	17	20	17	11
N	42	73	55	170	

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 4.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Based on data from only two schools.

Table 4.5

PERCEIVED NET EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES ON TEACHERS IN MINNEAPOLIS

(In percent)

Effect	Contemporary Teachers	Continuous Progress Teachers	Open Teachers	All Alternative Teachers[a]	Regular Teachers[b]
Positive effect	60	64	72	64	41
No effect	10	11	2	9	24
Negative effect	30	25	26	27	35
	100	100	100	100	100
N	53	95	62	210	17

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 2.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Based on data from only two schools.

overall) felt that alternatives had a negative effect on teachers. A variety of factors probably influence these assessments of the effect of alternatives on teachers.

Teacher Control over the Work Environment

For the most part, alternative teachers in Minneapolis did not have as much choice, voice, or autonomy as alternative teachers in Alum Rock. Administrators decided what programs would be offered and where they would be located. Teachers had few options about participating in alternatives, and they could be assigned to programs they did not like if there was a mismatch between teacher and consumer preferences for programs. Teachers were expected to adopt teaching styles in accordance with preestablished models of the teaching-learning process.[4]

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[4] Some local adaptation of the preestablished models was allowed. For example, some schools created "modified open" programs that were more teacher-directed that the pure "open" model. Still, the Minneapolis teachers were not as free as teachers in Eugene or Alum Rock to deviate from the program norms.

Choice. Once a cluster was designated as alternative, teachers in the cluster were obliged to participate. However, the district did obtain and consider teachers' first, second, and third preferences in making program assignments. The district honored these preferences as much as possible, subject to the demand for teachers in each type of program.

When the number of teacher applicants exceeded or fell short of the number of available positions, teachers' program assignments were partly determined by seniority. The district allowed exceptions to the seniority rule, if administrators offered a good reason for preferring a less-senior teacher.[5] Teachers initially assigned to programs they did not prefer, however, were often able to transfer to their preferred programs within a year or two as vacancies occurred.

When teachers were asked how much choice they had been given among programs, 30 percent reported complete choice, 31 percent reported limited choice, and 30 percent reported no choice at all. Teachers in the open programs reported having the greatest degree of program choice (58 percent said it was complete), while teachers in the continuous progress programs reported the least choice (only 29 percent said they had complete choice).[6] These data are consistent with our school interviews, in which many principals reported that teachers who preferred the contemporary program were assigned to the continuous program because more parents wanted continuous progress.

Voice. Most alternative teachers reported having "a lot of influence" or "some influence" over curriculum decisions at their schools and "some influence" or "no influence" over budget decisions and new teacher selection.[7] In general, teachers in open programs reported having more influence over program decisions than teachers in contemporary or continuous progress programs. The overall level of teacher influence over program decisions was much less in Minneapolis than in Alum Rock or Eugene.

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[5] The issue of seniority in teachers' transfers has been a matter of litigation between the district and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers. So far, the district's right to make exceptions to the seniority rule has been upheld by the courts.

[6] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 8.

[7] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 13b.

Autonomy. Alternative teachers in Minneapolis were divided in their perceptions of the effect of alternatives on teacher autonomy. Twenty-six percent felt teacher autonomy had increased, 40 percent felt it was the same, and 34 percent felt it had decreased since the introduction of alternatives.[8]

Workload

Most alternative teachers in Minneapolis reported that implementing alternatives had required some extra effort on their part. The amount varied considerably with the type of program. On a scale of 1 to 7 (no extra effort to a great deal of extra effort), contemporary teachers reported that the average amount of extra effort in their initial year of implementation was 4.7, compared with averages of 6.3 for continuous progress teachers and 6.5 for open teachers. After the first year of implementation, the average amount of extra work reported by all types of teachers showed a slight decrease.[9]

Teachers also estimated the actual number of hours they spent per week to plan and prepare for their classes. Contemporary and continuous progress teachers reported a median time of 10 hours for individual preparation, while open teachers reported 8 hours per week. The median amount of time spent in preparation with other teachers was 2 hours per week for contemporary teachers, 3.5 hours per week for continuous progress teachers, and 2 hours per week for open teachers.[10]

In spite of the widespread perception among teachers that alternatives meant more work for them, only 11 percent of the alternative teachers said that the extra work was a major disadvantage of alternatives. (Sixteen percent of the open teachers, 14 percent of the continuous progress teachers, and 2 percent of the contemporary teachers felt this way.) Still, one principal said that it was hard to recruit teachers for his open program because of the time commitment involved. One area director said that teachers' complaints about the extra time required for effective team teaching prompted him to provide each alternative school with two extra teachers to partially compensate for the extra workload.

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[8] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 13a.

[9] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 29.

[10] Spring 1977 teacher survey, questions 36, 37.

Teacher-Peer Relations

When alternative teachers were asked whether tension among programs had ever been a major problem in their district, 27 percent said "Yes."[11] However, when they were asked whether tension among programs had been a major problem in the past year, only 15 percent said "Yes." The perceived severity of tension among programs varied with the type of school: 32 percent of the teachers in multiprogram schools reported that tension among programs had been a major problem in the past year, compared with 11 percent of the teachers in single-program schools.[12]

Nine percent of the alternative teachers in Minneapolis complained that the feeling of competition among teachers was one of the main disadvantages of alternatives. A disproportionate number of these complaints came from teachers in multiprogram schools.[13] Given the higher degree of tension in multiprogram schools, it is not surprising that 60 percent of the teachers in single-program schools and 55 percent of the teachers in multiprogram schools said they would prefer to teach in a single-program school.[14]

Distribution of District Resources

A variety of evidence suggests that although teachers were concerned about the effect of alternatives on the district's distribution of resources among schools and programs, this concern had only a minor influence on teachers' overall evaluations of alternatives.

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[11] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 21a.

[12] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 22a ($\chi^2 = 10.6$ with 2 d.f., $p < .01$). We surveyed only three of the district's seven multiprogram schools. It is possible that the schools we surveyed were not representative of all the district's multiprogram schools.

[13] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 54 ($\chi^2 = 13.4$ with 3 d.f., $p < .01$).

[14] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 11.

When alternative teachers were asked directly whether fairness in allocating program funds had ever been a problem in the district, 37 percent reported it as a major problem, while 46 percent reported it as a minor problem. Twenty-eight percent reported that funding allocations had been a major problem "this year," and 44 percent reported it as a minor problem.[15]

In spite of these indications of teacher concern about the distribution of resources, only 2 percent of the teachers specifically mentioned inequities in funding as a major disadvantage of alternatives.[16] A much more common teacher complaint was that the already subsidized programs were not getting enough resources to do the job properly.[17]

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES

Most alternative teachers in Minneapolis supported the idea of alternatives, although the degree of support varied by program type. Sixty-nine percent of the contemporary and continuous progress teachers we surveyed thought that parent choice was a good idea, while 85 percent of the open teachers felt this way (see Table 4.6).

SUMMARY

As in Alum Rock, teachers' overall support for alternatives in Minneapolis varied from school to school. Teachers in open programs were the most enthusiastic supporters of alternatives, but most continuous progress, contemporary, and regular teachers in Minneapolis also supported the idea of parent choice.

Minneapolis' system of alternatives represented, in the eyes of most teachers, an improvement in the quality of education for children. Although this belief probably influenced teachers to support

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[15] Spring 1977 teacher survey, questions 21c, 22c.

[16] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 54.

[17] When the relationship between program subsidies and complaints about inadequate resources was examined, 88 percent of the complaints were found to be from teachers in already subsidized programs.

Table 4.6

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES IN MINNEAPOLIS
(In percent)

All things considered, do you think giving parents a choice among different types of programs for their children is a good idea or not?

Rating	Contemporary Teachers	Continuous Progress Teachers	Open Teachers	All Alternative Teachers[a]	Regular Teachers[b]
Good or very good idea	69	69	85	72	78
Fair idea	20	24	10	20	22
Poor or very poor idea	11	7	5	8	--
	100	100	100	100	100
N	54	97	62	213	18

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 3.

NOTE: The differences by type of teacher are statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 33.7$ with 12 d.f., $p < .001$).

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] These data are based on only two schools and should be treated as highly tentative.

alternatives, most teachers doubted that parents had enough knowledge about the programs to make good program choices.

Most alternative teachers (64 percent) felt that alternatives had a positive effect on teachers, while 27 percent felt alternatives had a negative effect. The remainder said alternatives had not affected teachers.

The most important effects of alternatives on teachers were their ability to choose among programs and to have a voice in program decisions. Teachers who perceived increased program choice and greater influence over school decisions than in the past were more enthusiastic about alternatives. Teachers who perceived limited choice and relatively little influence over school policy expressed negative attitudes toward alternatives in general.

Teachers had a variety of other concerns about the effects of alternatives, such as increased workload, more competition and tension among teachers, and unfair distribution of resources among schools and programs. However, these concerns had relatively little effect on teachers' general attitudes toward alternatives, except perhaps in the multiprogram schools. There, most teachers would have preferred changing to a single program form of organization to avoid the feelings of competition among programs in the same building.

Chapter 5

ALTERNATIVES IN EUGENE

THE SETTING

Eugene, Oregon is a growing city of 100,000. Most of the families are middle class and white. School District 4J serves the city of Eugene and several adjacent unincorporated areas. In the fall of 1977, it enrolled 20,000 students in 31 elementary schools, eight junior high schools, and four comprehensive high schools. That year, minority students constituted about 4 percent of the district's total enrollment.

Although the Eugene community is educationally conservative, the board has been described as "the most liberal board in the state." The district appears to have adequate financial resources, spending about $1600 per pupil in 1975-76 and maintaining a staffing ratio of 19/1.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVES IN EUGENE

Eugene has a small but active "counter-culture" that has supported the idea of alternative education for at least a decade. In the mid-1960s, parents formed several private alternative schools that offered a "free school" atmosphere for their children. Although none of these private schools still operate, the community elements that supported them are present and active today.

For many years, Eugene has had an open enrollment policy in which parents can apply to the superintendent if they want their child to attend a nonneighborhood school. Such requests are almost always granted provided that space is available at the receiving school. We estimated that 15 percent of the district's students may be using this option to attend nonneighborhood schools.

The idea of alternatives (as opposed to open enrollment) began to receive serious attention in 1973 during a series of community meetings to discuss the hiring of a new superintendent. Before this time the district operated a secondary-level "Opportunity Center" for dropouts and potential dropouts, but there was no thrust to provide educational alternatives for the mainstream of students. Many parents sought more open and humanistic forms of education, and the board decided to hire a superintendent who would support the idea of alternatives.

Dr. Thomas Paysant took office in the fall of 1973 and announced that the district was interested in alternatives. He asked for written proposals from teachers or parents outlining programs that would be "significantly different" from the regular program in curriculum, teaching style, organization, or governance. He warned, however, that the proposed programs must not cost more than the district average.

Thirteen proposals were submitted in January 1974, and the school board authorized implementation of seven during 1974-75. Four of the seven alternative programs had already been tried in some form in the district. Two were oriented toward "open classroom" concepts, and one was a pilot test for an environmental-outdoor program.

Between 1974-75 and 1976-77, Eugene's system of alternatives expanded to seven elementary and three secondary programs. The largest program enrolled 150 students; the smallest enrolled 40. The total enrollment in all 10 programs was about 980 students, just less than 5 percent of the district's total enrollment.

DISTRICT GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

In comparison with the other districts we studied, Eugene's objectives in initiating a system of alternatives were relatively modest. Alternatives were not seen as a major strategy for political or educational reform, and they were not intended to desegregate the district's schools. Basically, the district was responsive to the feelings of a small but articulate parent group who argued that the public schools ought to offer more choice of learning styles. The district did not set any specific goals for the size of its alternative program, and it did not take a strong advocacy role on behalf of alternatives. Rather, it adopted a low-key implementation strategy that supported local initiative but did not try to promote alternatives among people who were uninterested.

A significant constraint on Eugene's system of alternatives was the superintendent's decision that alternatives would not receive special funding. Eugene is not a poor school district, but its annual plebiscite on the school budget gives high visibility to the district's use of resources. Perhaps this was the reason for the superintendent's decision.

Another constraint was parents' unwillingness to close significantly underenrolled schools. The district's inability to close these schools limited its options in creating new alternative programs, because funds were tied up in neighborhood schools.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Responsibility for Program Formation and Management

Program Initiation. In Eugene, the teachers were responsible for program initiation. Although the district encouraged any interested person to submit an alternative program proposal, the majority of proposals came from teachers. All of the initial 13 proposals submitted in January were written primarily by teachers. Of the three proposals that were submitted and approved in later years, teachers wrote one and heavily contributed to another. Only one proposal was written entirely by parents, some of whom were former teachers.

The district's central office did not directly initiate any programs, although it helped interested groups to convene and write proposals. The district took a strong role in screening out inadequate proposals.

Each program designated the number of students it would enroll. Of the eight elementary alternatives whose proposals were approved, four proposed to enroll 150, one proposed to enroll 100, two proposed to enroll 75, and one proposed to enroll 25 students. The elementary programs chose small enrollments because teachers preferred smaller, more family-like units. Larger programs were not proposed because teachers knew the district was reluctant to provide the necessary space.

Programs also determined whether to offer a neighborhood or a district-wide alternative. Four neighborhood alternatives, which were aimed at students in a single-school attendance area, were located at the school whose teachers had initiated the proposal. Four district-wide alternatives, which were to attract students from any school in the district, were housed in schools with excess space. The location of these programs was decided by the district.

Program Development. Classroom teachers volunteered for the bulk of program development work. Teachers wrote proposals for alternatives on their own time. If their proposals were approved, they were usually paid some in-service time for initial program development. However, teachers spent a great deal of time beyond these initial steps. (See the discussion of workload below.)

Program Management. Each alternative program designated a "head teacher" whose influence over the program depended on the preferences of the other program teachers and on the principal's willingness to let the alternative program operate independently. Of the eight elementary programs operating in 1976-77, teachers stated that four were led by a strong head teacher, two were led by principals, and two operated on a group consensus model.

The head teacher was also responsible for curriculum leadership and community relations. Some assumed program budgeting responsibilities, and some participated in teacher evaluation and new teacher hiring. Because the district recognized head teachers as administrators, they participated in evaluation, but the principal retained final responsibility for personnel matters.

Student Admission and Transfer Policies

Eugene gave individual alternative programs more control over student admissions than any of the other districts we studied. Eugene's officially stated policy was that programs must be available to students, parents, and program staff by mutual consent. The "mutual consent" phrase meant that the teachers operating a program had no obligation to accommodate any excess demand by parents or students. Additional applicants were put on a waiting list, but no program ever expanded beyond the originally planned size in order to accommodate additional applicants.

Programs were free to decide who would be admitted. Neighborhood alternatives could accept some students from outside the neighborhood, and district-wide alternatives could allocate a percentage of their seats for students from the neighborhood school's attendance area. One district-wide alternative actively discouraged applicants from the neighborhood-school attendance area because it did not want to compete with the neighborhood school's program.

Each program also defined the procedure for admitting applicants and dealing with excess applicants. Some programs took applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. One held a lottery to determine who would be admitted. After a few years, one chose to restrict admissions to siblings of program participants. This program maintained this policy in spite of objections from parents who wanted to enroll their children in the program.

Financial Support for Alternatives

Eugene's general policy was that alternatives not be given special financial support beyond necessary start-up costs. Alternative teachers and programs competed with regular programs for extra funds. There were few exceptions to this "no-subsidy" policy:

1. Most alternative programs received a few weeks of in-service funding as part of their process of program development. However, in-service funds were available to all teachers on a competitive basis, and teachers from the alternative programs got a large share of these funds.
2. From 1973 to 1976, the superintendent's Special Projects Assistant spent about half-time on the care and feeding of alternative programs. This support amounted to a per-pupil expenditure of about $15. The Special Projects Office also distributed information to parents and sent letters to interested parents about specific program openings. Articles were also placed in the local newspaper each fall and spring. However, some programs still found it necessary to recruit students on their own.

3. In 1976 and 1977, head teachers received a 5-percent supplement to their normal salaries in recognition of their extra administrative responsibilities. In addition, one head teacher's teaching load was reduced to half-time in recognition of his special administrative responsibilities.
4. A few alternatives had serious enrollment problems at one time or another, which brought their pupil/teacher ratios substantially below the district-wide average. Because the number of teachers in these programs could not be reduced without creating oversized classes or forcing out some students, the district allowed the programs to continue underenrolled. Some people perceived this action as a form of subsidization.

The district's no-subsidy policy was quite firm about transportation. The district never provided transportation for students who wanted to attend nonneighborhood alternative programs. Instead, parents had to use private means of transportation to get their children to school. This policy consequently limited parents' demand for district-wide alternatives.

Leadership Support for Alternatives

In the first few years of implementation, the superintendent showed his personal interest in alternatives in a variety of ways: he set up and attended community meetings to discuss alternatives; he met frequently with the Special Projects Assistant; he helped resolve disputes about alternatives when they arose; and he enrolled his son in an alternative program.

However, the superintendent was careful not to oversell the idea of alternatives when discussing them with the whole staff. He usually presented the district's viewpoint briefly and pragmatically. He repeatedly reassured regular teachers that district resource allocation would not favor the alternative programs.

One of the superintendent's most frequent arguments for alternatives was the degree of community support for them. Whether it was intended to do so or not, this rationale gave the superintendent latitude to temper his support for alternatives if community interest should wane.

In fact, the superintendent's support for alternatives did become somewhat more tentative in the third year of implementation (1976-77). He maintained his support of the concept of parent choice, but he also expressed reservations about the practicality of some alternative programs. At this time he openly favored neighborhood programs over "magnet" programs because the latter often created problems over transportation, space, and staff allocations.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVES

In the spring of 1977, teachers in about half of Eugene's elementary schools were asked to describe in their own words the chief advantages and disadvantages of alternatives. A summary of their responses is shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

Most of Eugene's alternative teachers saw alternatives as beneficial to students, parents, or both. The most frequently mentioned benefit of alternatives to consumers was the availability of choice per se.

Most regular teachers also saw alternatives as beneficial to students or parents, but 33 percent suggested that alternatives were not putting enough emphasis on basic skills, and 13 percent felt that parents were not making good program choices.

Alternative teachers were divided in their assessments of the effects of alternatives on themselves. Twenty-seven percent felt that the alternatives were good because they gave teachers more choice, but 21 percent complained that alternatives were too much work, and 11 percent said teachers felt pressured or threatened because of alternatives.

Regular teachers were less likely to see alternatives as beneficial to teachers: Only 15 percent cited benefits to teachers while 35 percent cited disadvantages. The most common complaint among regular teachers was that alternatives created a feeling of competition among teachers.

Table 5.1

WHAT EUGENE TEACHERS LIKED ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

What do you see as the chief advantages of educational alternatives in your district?

Advantage	Percent Citing the Advantage	
	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers[a]
Advantages for Students		
Gives students a choice/variety	32	18
Meets differing needs of students	23	28
Other advantages for students	4	17
One or more advantages for students[b]	54	55
Advantages for Parents		
Gives parents a choice/variety	32	41
Parents more involved/satisfied/supportive	14	9
One or more advantages for parents[b]	46	48
Advantages for Teachers		
Gives teachers a choice	27	8
Other advantages for teachers	0	7
One or more advantages for teachers[b]	27	15
General Advantages		
Gives people a choice	32	4
Other general advantages	23	4
One or more general advantages[b]	50	8
N	22	137

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 53. Up to three responses per teacher were coded. Only advantages cited by at least 10 percent of alternative or regular teachers are shown in this table.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for single-program and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Percentages reflect multiple answers by some respondents.

Table 5.2

WHAT EUGENE TEACHERS DISLIKED ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

What do you see as the chief disadvantage of educational alternatives in your district?

Disadvantages	Percent Citing the Disadvantage: Alternative Teachers	Percent Citing the Disadvantage: Regular Teachers[a]
Disadvantages for Students		
Not enough emphasis on basic skills	5	33
Parents do not make good program choices	5	13
Other disadvantages for students	16	6
One or more disadvantages for students[b]	26	49
Disadvantages for Parents		
One or more disadvantages for parents[b]	16	--
Disadvantages for Teachers		
Too much competition	--	12
Too much work	21	4
Teachers feel pressured/threatened	11	8
Other disadvantages for teachers	5	18
One or more disadvantages for teachers[b]	32	35
General Disadvantages		
Inadequate resources for alternatives	16	12
Transportation problems	26	9
Other general disadvantages	--	11
One or more general disadvantages[b]	26	32
N	19	122

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 54. Up to three responses per teacher were coded. Only disadvantages cited by at least 10 percent of alternative or regular teachers are shown in this table.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for single-program and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

[b] Percentages reflect multiple answers by some respondents.

Fifty percent of the alternative teachers and 8 percent of the regular teachers cited at least one general advantage of alternatives (that is, an advantage without a clear beneficiary). Thirty-two percent of the alternative teachers simply noted that alternatives "give people a choice," and, based on data not reported in Table 5.1, another 23 percent felt that alternatives were beneficial because they encouraged innovation.

Among the general disadvantages of alternatives, 26 percent of the alternative teachers and 9 percent of the regular teachers cited transportation problems. Also 16 percent of the alternative teachers and 12 percent of the regular teachers felt alternatives were not being adequately funded.

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Parents versus Students as the Intended Beneficiary

In their open-ended comments about alternatives, slightly more than half of the Eugene teachers suggested that alternatives were beneficial for students, and slightly less than half suggested that they were beneficial for parents. Thus Eugene teachers were midway between Alum Rock teachers (who named parents) and Minneapolis teachers (who named students) in their assessment of the intended beneficiary of alternatives.

Effects on Students

Most alternative teachers (92 percent) felt that alternatives had improved the quality of education in their district. However, the modal opinion among regular teachers was that the district's quality of education had not changed as a result of alternatives (see Table 5.3).

Ability of Parents To Make Good Program Choices

When teachers were asked to identify the chief disadvantages of alternatives, few suggested that parents' failure to make good program choices was a serious problem (see Table 5.2). However, when teachers were asked directly if they thought parents knew enough about the

Table 5.3

PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES IN EUGENE
(In percent)

In general, how do you think the existence of educational alternatives has affected the quality of education received by the children of your district?

Rating	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers[a]
Has increased quality	92	35
Has not changed quality	8	50
Has decreased quality	---	15
	100	100
N	24	158

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 1.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for single-program and multiprogram schools. See the appendix for details.

programs being offered to be able to make good program choices, 25 percent of the alternative teachers and 63 percent of the regular teachers said "No" (see Table 5.4).

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON TEACHERS

The teachers' responses shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 suggest that the system of alternatives in Eugene brought both advantages and disadvantages for teachers. Advantages included increased teacher choice and creative opportunity. Disadvantages included worry about enrollments, feelings that resources were inadequate, and feelings that alternatives required too much work. The data in Table 5.5 show that 88 percent of the alternative teachers surveyed felt alternatives were beneficial for teachers, while 12 percent felt they had no effect.

Table 5.4

TEACHERS' CONFIDENCE IN PARENTS' PROGRAM CHOICES IN EUGENE
(In percent)

Do you think most parents know enough about the educational programs being offered in your district to be able to make good program choices for their children?

Response	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers in Multi-program Schools	Regular Teachers in Single-Program Schools
Yes	38	28	13
No	25	47	63
Do not know	38	25	24
	100	100	100
N	24	57	101

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 4.

Among regular teachers, about 40 percent felt alternatives were good for teachers, about 40 percent felt they had no effect, and 20 percent felt they had a negative effect.

Teacher Control over the Work Environment

Eugene's implementation strategy emphasized volunteer teacher participation in alternatives. Subsequently, teachers had a great deal of control over program sizes, student admissions, curriculum development, and day-to-day program management. Therefore, it is not surprising that the alternative teachers reported a high degree of control over their personal work setting.

Voice. Most alternative teachers felt that their participation in alternatives afforded them more influence over program decisions. Ninety-one percent said they had "a lot" of influence over curriculum

Table 5.5

PERCEIVED NET EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVES ON TEACHERS IN EUGENE
(In percent)

Overall, has the existence of alternatives in your district had a positive effect, a negative effect, or no effect on teachers?

Effect	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers in Multi-program Schools	Regular Teachers in Single-Program Schools
Positive effect	88	49	39
No effect	12	32	41
Negative effect	--	19	20
	100	100	100
N	24	57	101

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 2.

decisions, 86 percent felt they had a lot of influence over staffing decisions, and 50 percent felt they had a lot of influence over budget decisions.

Choice. Only three of 22 alternative teachers said that, if they had a choice, they would prefer to teach in another school or program. Presumably, these teachers became dissatisfied with their assignments, because all had originally volunteered to teach in alternatives.

Autonomy. Sixty-eight percent of Eugene's alternative teachers felt that teacher autonomy had increased since the beginning of alternatives.

For regular teachers, the introduction of alternatives did not alter their control over their work environment. Only a few reported changes in their degree of influence over school-level decisions.

Only 3 percent said that alternatives had caused them to worry whether they would get enough students to keep their current teaching positions. Seventy-five percent felt that their degree of autonomy had not changed since the introduction of alternatives.

Workload

All of the alternative teachers reported that implementing alternatives required extra effort on their part. Sixty-nine percent said it required "a great deal" of effort in the initial year, and 31 percent felt it required "a great deal" of effort after the first year. Some teachers spent an entire summer on their own time to plan their program. Another group of teachers prepared its program after school, twice a week for six months. Teachers in a third alternative program spent about 15 extra hours per week through their entire first year.

In spite of this high level of extra work, relatively few alternative teachers (17 percent) mentioned the increased workload as a significant disadvantage of alternatives. Apparently, most alternative teachers' enthusiasm outweighed the hardships of increased workload.

Some of the programs' head teachers did seem to have workload problems. One program lost two head teachers in its first two years, partly because of the workload. One teacher (not a head teacher) complained to the superintendent about the lack of released time for head teachers. This teacher felt that released teaching time should be a necessary condition of the job. However, we know of only one program that was allowed to reduce the head teacher's teaching assignment. Head teachers in the other programs were granted a small salary increment in recognition of their responsibilities.

Teacher-Peer Relations

When alternative and regular teachers in multiprogram schools were asked whether tension between programs was a problem in their school, 28 percent felt that it had been a major problem in the past, but only 9 percent felt it was still a major problem.[1] Overall, 56 percent of all teachers in the multiprogram schools said they preferred that their schools offer more than one program, and an additional 21 percent were indifferent.[2] This degree of support for multiprogram schools was not found among multiprogram teachers in Alum Rock or Minneapolis.

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[1] Spring 1977 teacher survey, questions 21a and 22a.

Distribution of District Resources

Only 3 percent of the teachers complained that the district's system of alternatives had led to an inequitable distribution of resources.[3] Thus, unlike the teacher organizations in Alum Rock, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis, the Eugene Educators Association did not become involved in the issue of costs for alternative programs.

There was some sentiment among both alternative and regular teachers that the district had undersupported alternatives. Twelve percent of the alternative teachers and 10 percent of the regular teachers complained that the district's allocation of resources to alternatives was inadequate. Another 21 percent of the alternative teachers cited inadequate transportation as a chief disadvantage of alternatives.

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES

Our data show that Eugene's implementation strategy won the support of most of the district's teachers. All of the alternative teachers surveyed felt that parent choice was a good idea overall. Among regular teachers, 84 percent of those in multiprogram schools and 70 percent of those in single-program schools thought parent choice was a good idea (see Table 5.6).

SUMMARY

Eugene developed its system of alternatives in response to a small but articulate minority of parents and teachers who wanted the district to offer some different, particularly more "open," approaches

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[2] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 11.

[3] Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 54.

Table 5.6

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES IN EUGENE
(In percent)

All things considered, do you think giving parents a choice among different types of programs for their children is a good idea or not?

Rating	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers in Multi-program Schools[a]	Regular Teachers in Single-Program Schools[a]	All Teachers
Good or very good idea	100	84	70	74
Fair idea	--	12	23	20
Poor or very poor idea	--	4	7	6
	100	100	100	100
N	24	58	101	183

SOURCE: Spring 1977 teacher survey, question 3.

[a] Weighted to reflect the different sampling rates for multiprogram and single-program schools.

to education. The superintendent moderately supported alternatives, but always carefully reassured regular teachers that alternatives would not draw status or resources away from the neighborhood schools. The district provided only very limited financial support to establish alternatives, but it did give alternative teachers considerable control in program design, implementation, and management.

Few teachers actually volunteered to try alternative programs. Some teachers were undoubtedly deterred from alternatives because of the heavy initial investment required of teachers to develop a program. Other teachers said they perceived no advantages to be designated "alternative" teachers, because they were already free to try out different classroom methods.

The teachers who joined alternative programs were, of course, almost universally enthusiastic about the idea of alternatives. Their most frequent personal complaint was the extra work required, but only a minority of alternative teachers felt this was a major disadvantage.

Regular teachers were relatively unaffected by the system of alternatives in Eugene. Alternative programs had the right to limit their enrollments, and none seemed particularly eager to expand, even though several had long waiting lists. This meant that regular teachers were not threatened by losing students to alternative programs. In addition, the alternative programs were not drawing resources away from neighborhood schools and were not viewed as pedagogically superior to regular school programs.

Perhaps in a spirit of "live and let live," regular teachers in Eugene showed generally favorable attitudes toward the idea of parent choice, although most did not feel that the existence of alternatives necessarily improved the quality of education. Those regular teachers who opposed the idea of parent choice cited two main reasons: Alternative students were not learning enough basic skills, and the system of alternatives harmed teachers because it created inequities, unnecessary competition, and too much parent power.

Chapter 6
ALTERNATIVES IN CINCINNATI

THE SETTING

Cincinnati is a city of 450,000 in a metropolitan area of 1.4 million. The city's population is ethnically diverse and includes numerous Catholics of German descent, former Southerners, Appalachians, and blacks. As in many cities, Cincinnati's total population has been declining since about 1960, and its black population has been growing. In 1970, 28 percent of the city's population was black.

The Cincinnati Public Schools, like the city they serve, have faced a declining total enrollment and a growing proportion of black students this decade. Between 1970 and 1976, total enrollment declined from 82,000 to 66,000 students, and the proportion of black students increased from 45 to 51 percent. As in many urban school districts, Cincinnati has faced increasing problems raising adequate revenues and desegregating its schools as the proportion of poor and black families increases.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVES IN CINCINNATI

According to some observers, Cincinnati's alternatives date back to 1918, when the district opened its city-wide college preparatory high school, Walnut Hills. The district also operated a city-wide vocational school (Courter) for many years. Because these first "alternative" schools were selective and oriented toward students of specific ability levels, they differ from most of Cincinnati's present alternatives, which try to attract students of all ability levels. However, their existence set a precedent for the district's newer alternatives that began to form in 1973.

The growth of alternatives in Cincinnati began with the appointment of Superintendent Donald Waldrip in July 1972. Dr. Waldrip named desegregation of the city's schools as one of his primary concerns. However, he emphasized that his goal was to desegregate "without chasing white people and their monetary support to the suburbs." He suggested that one way to do this was to provide such an outstanding education program that people will want to move to the city to take advantage of it. Thus, he submitted a tax levy to the voters in May 1973, which included provisions to develop alternative forms of education for students who required or desired optional methods of instruction.

When the tax levy failed, the superintendent decided to start alternatives on a small scale rather than wait for the funds needed to start a large system. The district's first two alternatives opened in September 1973. The School for the Creative and Performing Arts started with 150 students (grades 4 to 6) in a few empty classrooms at a neighborhood school. City-Wide High School, a school-without-walls modeled after the famous Parkway School in Philadelphia, opened with 200 students (grades 9 to 12), also sharing space with a neighborhood school.

Building on the apparent success of the first two programs, the system expanded to five programs at 10 sites in the fall of 1974. At the elementary level, a German bilingual program and an Individually Guided Education (IGE) program were added. At the secondary level, a junior high college readiness program began. Total student enrollment in alternatives grew to about 2200.

By 1975, Cincinnati offered 14 alternative programs at 28 sites. New elementary programs included elementary college prep, a fundamental school, French and Spanish bilingual programs, a Montessori school, a multiage ungraded school, a pair of reading centers, and an interracial program called IPSIP. At the secondary level, an Academy of Math and Science was started for grades 7 and 8, with the intention of expanding one grade per year until the Academy would offer grades 7 to 12 in 1979-80. The total enrollment in alternatives grew to 5400.

Only one alternative program (junior high IGE) was introduced in the fall of 1976, but the number of sites expanded to 36 and the grade levels taught at each site also continued to expand. About 7800 students were enrolled in the alternative programs during 1976-77.

In 1977, Cincinnati set about to expand its system of alternatives to 21 programs at 51 sites, setting a target enrollment of

12,000 students in alternatives for the fall. New elementary programs included an applied arts program, a basic skills immersion program, an elementary math and science program, and a physical education program. At the secondary level, a junior high basic skills program, a high school program for military sciences, and a high school academy of international studies were offered. However, only the applied arts, elementary math-science, and physical education programs attracted the right balance of students to open, so the total enrollment in alternatives for 1977-78 fell short of 9000.[1]

DISTRICT GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

Superintendent Waldrip's main reason for promoting alternatives was his belief that alternatives could attract white parents into integrated educational settings within the city school system. The board's interest in alternatives was also closely related to integration, as evidenced by its inclusion of alternative schools in the "Plan for Quality Integrated Education," which was adopted in January 1974.

For alternatives to significantly influence racial isolation, the district needed to enroll a large proportion of the total student population in alternatives. (Superintendent Waldrip set a goal of 40 percent by 1980.) To enroll this proportion, the district required a substantial commitment of time and resources to develop very attractive programs. At the same time, the district could not neglect its neighborhood schools in which most of its students were enrolled and which the majority of board members were committed to defend.[2] This required a delicate balancing act between the interests of the alternative programs (many of which had developed influential parent constituencies) and the interests of the neighborhood schools. The board's goal was to develop successful alternatives at low cost, to find sites for alternatives without closing neighborhood schools, and to allay neighborhood school concerns that alternative programs would attract all of the best teachers and students.

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[1] The district decided not to label its reading centers as alternatives for 1977, because enrollment in these was by referral, not parent choice.

[2] Since 1974, the board had been controlled by a group calling itself the Neighborhood Schools Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Responsibility for Program Formation and Management

Given its desegregation goals, Cincinnati could not leave decisions about the content, location, and form of organization of alternative programs entirely to local initiative. Thus, a district-controlled process determined what kinds of programs in what locations would accomplish racial balance in the city's schools.

Program Initiation. The superintendent directly controlled program initiation. He sought people to develop plans for the alternative programs he had in mind, and listened to people with other ideas for alternative programs. The district also took existing educational models (such as the IGE and IPSIP programs) and incorporated them into its alternative system. In each case, the superintendent decided, with staff advice, which programs to include.

Consistent with the board's commitment to neighborhood schools, most of the programs were organized as programs-within-schools.[3] To promote the district's desegregation goals, the superintendent selected program locations and set program target enrollments, based on such factors as the availability of space, availability of staff with the needed skills, and estimated parent interest.

Program Development. Once the general theme of a program was established, a downtown administrator and/or a specially hired program coordinator were usually given the responsibility for program development. Several programs provided paid planning time for classroom teachers, at least in the early years. Teachers in other programs gave many summer weeks and school-year weekends of their own time for program development.

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[3] This report defines programs-within-schools as those programs that did not have their own principal. In 1976-77, 29 of the district's 36 alternative sites were organized as programs-within-schools.

Program Management. In 1976-77, 19 of 36 alternative sites had a full-time principal and/or a nonteaching program coordinator as program managers. Seven sites had a full-time principal; twelve other sites had a clearly identifiable, nonteaching program leader. At the remaining sites, a part-time principal or a full-time teacher acted as program leader.

Student Admission and Transfer Policies

Cincinnati's student admission and transfer policies were not as proconsumer as those of Alum Rock or Minneapolis. Although Cincinnati's long-run commitment was to expand programs to meet the demand, the city was not committed to admitting all applicants the year they applied. Rather the district's main objective was to induce parents to enroll their children voluntarily in racially desegregated educational programs, which were usually located in a school outside of the neighborhood. This required the creation of very high-quality programs.[4] The district's strategy was to slowly and carefully set yearly target enrollments for each program, by considering how much existing programs could expand and how many new programs the district could sustain. The district strongly encouraged parents to apply; enrollments beyond set limits were put on waiting lists until the program had openings or expanded.

At first, alternative programs screened applicants for admission. However, complaints that the alternative programs were only admitting better students led the district to all but eliminate program-level control of student admissions in 1976 and 1977. Some alternative teachers we interviewed had strong misgivings about this policy, but the district considered it important to show that the alternative programs were not just getting the "cream of the crop" and sending the problem students back to the neighborhood schools.

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[4] Bridge and Blackman (1978), who examined parent survey data from several school districts, found that most parents felt school location was the most important factor in choosing an educational program for their child.

Financial Support

It is difficult to measure accurately the cost of implementing alternatives in a locally funded system, but Cincinnati's initial financial support for alternatives was clearly substantial. A district report issued in 1976 showed an average extra expenditure of about $180 per pupil in 1975-76. Of the district's 13 programs, four spent less than $100 extra per pupil, four spent between $100 and $200, three spent between $200 and $300, and two spent over $300 per pupil.[5]

About 80 percent of the excess costs went for extra program staff: Six programs had nonteaching program coordinators, five had specialist teachers, five had classroom aides, and four hired extra teachers to reduce class size. One program provided teachers with daily released time for program development. In many cases these extra resources meant that the alternative programs could be developed without placing an unreasonable burden on alternative teachers. (See the discussion of workload below.)

About 20 percent of the excess costs were spent on classroom materials and remodeling. Although the expenditures for remodeling were not a large proportion of the total, they sometimes attracted considerable attention from regular teachers in the same building. For example, teachers asked why the wing of a building with an alternative program was painted or carpeted when these amenities were not available to the regular school program.

Because Cincinnati's alternatives were locally funded under a chronically tight financial situation, the excess costs for alternatives underwent continuous scrutiny. The board insisted that more expensive programs trim their costs, bringing the projected extra per-pupil expenditure down to about $130 for the 1977-78 school year. Many alternative teachers questioned whether alternative programs could maintain their distinctiveness under further budget cuts.

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[5] This included capital expenditures but did not include the costs of curriculum coordinators for some programs. There were also substantial extra costs for pupil transportation that were paid by the state.

Leadership Support

From the start of alternatives in 1973 until he left the superintendency in 1976, Waldrip was an ardent supporter of the concept of alternatives in Cincinnati. His arguments for alternatives were both educational and political, although political arguments predominated. Educationally, he argued that no single curriculum can possibly satisfy the abilities and aspirations of all students. Politically, he argued that alternatives were a way to solve the district's problems of racial isolation and white flight. Waldrip supported his advocacy position in a variety of ways: He encouraged his staff to find and develop new program ideas; he personally considered and approved the programs offered each year; he found community resources to help develop alternatives; and he enrolled his own children in alternative programs.

When the superintendency changed hands in 1976, Dr. James Jacobs continued his predecessor's commitment to alternatives, although with a somewhat more balanced perspective. As an assistant superintendent, Jacobs had spoken of the limitations of alternatives as a means of promoting racial balance, pointing out that (1) not all parents and children valued alternatives, (2) alternatives were expensive to develop, and (3) it was not in the district's interest for neighborhood school parents to feel that their schools were being neglected. When he took office, one of his priorities was to "clean up" the district's alternative system by developing a set of consistent governing policies and procedures. By 1977, Jacobs published the "Alternative Program Manual," which coordinated the district's efforts to expand alternatives from 8000 to 12,000 students.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO ALTERNATIVES

Because Rand was not permitted to collect teacher survey data in Cincinnati, comparisons between this and the other three sites are tenuous. Moreover, we are unable to present a systematic picture of Cincinnati teachers' perceptions of alternatives from the data made available to us. The following data on Cincinnati teachers were available:

- A survey of alternative and regular teachers conducted by the district in March 1976 (N = 2392 teachers).
- Teacher interviews at 10 neighborhood schools conducted by the School Foundation of Greater Cincinnati in the spring of 1976.
- A survey of alternative teachers, regular teachers, and administrators in schools that housed alternative programs conducted by the district in the fall of 1976 (N = 368 respondents).
- A survey of teachers conducted by the Citizens' Alternative School Task Force in March 1977 (N = 103 teachers).
- A March 1977 statement by the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers on the district's alternative school policies.
- Informal interviews with alternative teachers, representatives of two teacher organizations, and district administrators conducted by Rand staff between February 1976 and March 1977.

None of these sources was adequate to cover the full range of teachers' perceptions of alternatives, and some sources were vulnerable to nonresponse bias or sampling error. Within these limitations, we drew on these information sources to create the picture presented below.

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON STUDENTS AND PARENTS

During the 1975-77 period, most alternative teachers in Cincinnati felt that their programs were valuable to students and parents. Most regular teachers felt that alternatives were worthwhile for the participants, but that the system of alternatives hurt the neighborhood schools by drawing away financial resources and talented students.

The district's March 1976 teacher survey asked all teachers to rate the effects of alternatives on student attitudes, motivation, and academic achievement and to report the degree of parent support and involvement at their school. Alternative teachers gave above average scores on all five indicators of consumer benefit (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES ON STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN CINCINNATI

(Teachers were asked to rate each of the following survey items on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = poor, 4 = average, and 7 = excellent.)

	Mean Rating	
Survey Item	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers
Student attitudes toward alternative programs (Q35)	5.2	3.5
Effect of alternative programs on student motivation (Q5)	5.1	3.4
Effect of alternative programs on academic achievement in our school (Q19)	4.9	3.2
Community's attitude toward our school (Q9)	4.9	3.9
Parent involvement in our school (Q21)	5.0	3.4

SOURCE: March 1976 survey of Cincinnati teachers by the district.

NOTE: N = 2023 regular teachers, 369 alternative teachers.

In contrast, regular teachers rated student attitudes toward alternatives and the effect of alternatives on student motivation and achievement slightly below average.

Interviews with regular teachers conducted in the spring of 1976 by the School Foundation of Greater Cincinnati asked teachers whether providing a choice of programs had a positive effect, a negative effect, or no effect on students' learning. Teachers at 6 of the 10 neighborhood schools in the sample felt that providing choice had a positive effect. Most supported this point of view with the argument that children learn better when they can choose a program that interests them. Other teachers were uncertain about the effects of parent choice on student learning.

Beyond the educational effects of alternatives, many teachers in Cincinnati also considered school desegregation in assessing the overall social value of alternative programs. Some teachers who might otherwise have opposed alternatives felt they were preferable to mandatory busing. Other teachers criticized alternatives as a tactic for avoiding genuine school desegregation.

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON TEACHERS

For alternative teachers, Cincinnati's system of alternatives generated both benefits and costs. Many alternative teachers were enthusiastic about their programs, but some regarded district support as inadequate. For regular teachers, the system generated few benefits and some costs. The main costs were the loss of talented students and district resources that went to alternative programs instead of the neighborhood schools.

Teacher Control of the Work Environment

Overall, the system of alternatives in Cincinnati was perceived by most teachers as giving them adequate choice of program and slightly more voice in decisionmaking. There seems to have been little change in the degree of teacher autonomy.

Choice. Before expanding or offering new programs, the district considered the availability of willing and qualified teachers. Thus, teachers usually volunteered when programs needed staffing. The district advertised the new positions, which were typically first open to teachers from the school where the program was to be located. In other cases, recruitment was district-wide. If too few teachers applied, the district filled vacancies by assigning qualified teachers from the district's surplus list. If no qualified district teacher was found for a position, the district advertised nationally.

The district's March 1976 teacher survey indicated that most alternative teachers chose their assignments freely. When teachers were asked to rate "satisfaction with my teacher assignment" on a scale from 1 to 7 (poor to excellent), 79 percent of the alternative teachers rated their satisfaction level at 5, or above, while only 8 percent expressed dissatisfaction with their assignments (see Table 6.2). Regular teachers were less pleased with their assignments.

Voice. Teachers' involvement in shaping program curriculum was variable. One could hypothesize that teachers' level of involvement in program development would depend on whether or not the program had a designated program leader. We did not observe such a relationship. Some programs with a designated leader also had a high degree of teacher involvement in program development, and teacher involvement was not uniformly high in programs without formal leaders.

By our analysis, teachers generally had little voice in program budget or staffing decisions. Budget decisions were usually made downtown, and staffing decisions were usually made by the program coordinators or principals with the assistance of the central office. This view of the teacher's role is supported by data from the district's March 1976 teacher survey. When teachers were asked to rate "my involvement in decisions affecting me" on a scale from 1 to 7, the mean ratings for alternative and regular teachers, respectively, were 4.4 and 3.9.

Table 6.2

TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR ASSIGNMENTS IN CINCINNATI
(In percent)

Rating	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers
Above average (5-7)	79	65
Average (4)	13	19
Below average (1-3)	8	16
	100	100
N	365	2005

Autonomy. A number of programs had definite expectations for teacher behavior, which teachers seemed to willingly accept. The Montessori program, for example, included many prescriptions for teachers. Because these teachers had accepted the Montessori discipline in their graduate training, they did not think of it as a limitation on their freedom.

Workload

As in every district we studied, most alternative teachers in Cincinnati experienced an increased workload from their participation in alternatives. Although some highly enthusiastic teachers did not mind the extra hours, other teachers complained that they were not adequately compensated for new curriculum development. A 1976 district survey of teachers and administrators in schools with alternative programs asked teachers whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that "teachers should be compensated for additional work on curriculum writing for special alternative programs, material development, and in-service." Of 344 respondents, 92 percent agreed. The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers' official position on alternatives (adopted in March 1977) expressed concern that "many teachers in alternative schools...are expected to write curricula while simultaneously performing their daily teaching tasks.... Some schools receive in-service training and professional guidance, others receive only meager support."

Teacher-Peer Relations

According to the district's March 1976 teacher survey, the degree of cooperation among teachers in alternative programs was slightly higher than that reported by teachers in regular programs. When asked to rate "cooperation among teachers in our school" from 1 to 7, alternative teachers' ratings averaged 5.0 and regular teachers' ratings averaged 4.6. At the same time, we saw evidence of tension between alternative and regular teachers in some multiprogram schools. The tensions seemed strongest where the alternative program enjoyed physical amenities (such as carpeting or newly painted halls) that had been denied to the regular program.

Distribution of District Resources

We reported above that alternative teachers wanted more district funds for curriculum development and that some regular teachers were concerned about amenities provided to alternative programs. Additional data suggest that teachers' concerns about the funding of alternatives were relatively widespread in Cincinnati. A 1976 survey of 107 alternative and 201 regular teachers in schools housing alternatives asked if teachers agreed that "the allocation of materials and supplies [to alternatives] should be the same as that of other schools except for initial expenditures." Seventy percent of the regular school staff agreed with this statement, while 60 percent of the alternative teachers disagreed.

In Cincinnati School Foundation's 1976 interviews with neighborhood school teachers, teachers at four of ten neighborhood schools felt the board and administration favored the alternative programs. Teachers reported "much resentment" at the perceived favoritism, and felt that money was being spent on an idea that had not been adequately tested. Teachers at one school were concerned that the board would abolish neighborhood schools.

The Citizens' Alternative School Task Force, when it asked teachers for their views on alternatives in March 1977, found that funding was the most frequently mentioned concern. We calculated that 33 percent of the teachers felt the special funding of alternatives was inequitable or unjustifiable, or that other priorities were more important than the further expansion of alternatives. Many teachers were opposed to the special funding because the district had not given teachers a raise in two years. These results illustrate the concern of many regular teachers that the system of alternatives was being financed at the expense of other district priorities.

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES

According to the March 1976 survey, 66 percent of the district's alternative teachers felt the alternative school plan was effective and supported the idea of increasing the number of alternative programs. Most regular teachers expressed neutral or negative feelings toward plan effectiveness. Regular teachers were divided on the issue of alternative program expansion: 34 percent supported expansion, 28 percent were neutral, and 38 percent were opposed (see Table 6.3). Alternative and regular teachers had a common interest in opposing the further expansion of alternatives, because expansion would take funds from both groups.

Table 6.3

TEACHERS' OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES IN CINCINNATI
(In percent)

Survey Item	Alternative Teachers	Regular Teachers
Effectiveness of alternative school plan		
Positive	66	18
Neutral	22	38
Negative	11	44
	99	100
N	349	1504
Value of increasing the number of alternative programs		
Positive	66	34
Neutral	19	28
Negative	16	38
	101	100
N	349	1504

SOURCE: March 1976 district survey of Cincinnati teachers (2023 regular teachers and 369 alternative teachers responded to the survey).

NOTE: Teachers were asked to rate each survey item on a scale from 1 to 7 (1 = poor, 4 = average, and 7 = excellent). In the table, responses from 5 to 7 were aggregated as "positive" and responses from 1 to 3 were aggregated as "negative."

The Cincinnati Teachers Association (CTA), the teachers' official representative before December 1976, did not take a formal position on the district's alternative policy. To CTA, the system of alternatives, even with its drawbacks, was apparently preferable to mandatory busing. The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT), after being voted into power in January 1977, endorsed a somewhat different point of view.

SUMMARY

Cincinnati planned to create a steadily expanding system of alternatives that would ultimately enroll enough students to accomplish voluntary school desegregation. During the 1973-1977 period, alternatives were given continuing leadership support by the superintendent and board, although not all alternative programs were fully satisfied with the district's commitment to them. Financial support (totally from district funds) amounted to about $2 million over the five-year period.

The superintendent determined program themes and locations, and he was assisted by administrators at the Education Center. Most programs were organized as programs-within-schools because the district could not fund new school facilities and was reluctant to close neighborhood schools. The district decided each year how many students it could accommodate in each program and took the responsibility for recruiting these students. The rate of expansion was slow enough that most alternative teaching positions were staffed by volunteers. Teachers played a significant role in program development, but the district also hired a number of nonteaching curriculum coordinators to help develop new program curricula. Student admissions, originally controlled by each program, were gradually centralized to maximize the enrollment in alternatives and to assure regular teachers that all the best students would not be placed in alternative programs.

Most teachers felt the system of alternatives was advantageous to the community for two reasons: Students had better educational opportunities, and the system would save the district from mandatory busing. However, a number of neighborhood school teachers felt neglected, as the district gave more and more attention to alternatives.

Alternatives had a positive effect on most alternative teachers, who were more satisfied with their teaching assignments and their voice in decisionmaking than their neighborhood school counterparts. Some teachers, however, felt that the district's lack of adequate financial support for curriculum development resulted in too heavy workloads and lower quality programs.

Alternatives had either no effect or a negative effect on regular school teachers. Some regular school teachers were concerned that the alternative programs were getting all the better students, while others felt that the alternative programs were getting more than a fair share of the district's attention and resources.

Appendix
METHODOLOGY

Four main topics are discussed in this appendix: (1) general parameters that guided the study; (2) selection of sample districts; (3) criteria used to identify alternative programs; and (4) specifics of data collection at each site.

GENERAL PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

In 1972, Rand was awarded a contract to evaluate the Alum Rock voucher demonstration. This voucher demonstration was originally designed to test the idea of letting parents send their children to public or private schools at public expense. As the demonstration developed in practice, however, it never included private schools and became essentially an interesting variant of the broader movement to provide alternatives within the public schools. Rand's study was therefore expanded so Alum Rock's experiences could be compared with those of other districts that had also experimented with alternatives.

We chose to study a few districts intensively, rather than a larger number of districts more superficially. A total of four districts (including Alum Rock) seemed to be a small enough number to enable us to study each in some detail, yet a large enough number to support some tentative generalizations. Rand contacted more than 30 school districts across the nation and identified several that had made substantial commitments to alternative education. Of these, the following three districts were selected to participate in the study:

- Minneapolis, Minnesota;
- Cincinnati, Ohio; and
- Eugene, Oregon

Our study, of which this report is the third in a seven-volume series, focused primarily on the processes of implementing alternatives rather than on the educational outcomes of alternatives. We chose this focus because many previous studies of educational innovation had focused attention prematurely on the outcomes of innovations, without establishing first whether and in what form the innovations were actually implemented.[1]

Our implicit model of the innovation process was an interest-group model. That is, we assumed that a district's success or failure in implementing an innovation such as alternatives was likely to depend on the goals and concerns of the major interest groups that would be affected by the innovation: parents, teachers, principals, and district management. Three of the study's seven volumes deal with specific interest groups. One (Bridge and Blackman, 1978) deals with parents; one (Thomas, 1978) deals with principals; and the present volume deals with teachers.

SITE SELECTION

In selecting sites we purposely selected a sample of districts with diverse approaches to implementing alternatives. To begin with, we established a list of minimum criteria:

- The system must include elementary alternatives.
- The system must offer at least three different programs.
- The alternative programs must be oriented toward "normal" children, not just those with special needs or problems.
- Students must have the option of attending a school other than their neighborhood school.
- At least 5 percent of the district's elementary students should be enrolled in an alternative program.
- The site chosen should represent a variety of different communities across the United States.

We searched several directories of alternative schools and telephoned experts across the country to identify districts that might meet these criteria. We called 32 districts and visited eight before selecting Alum Rock, Cincinnati, Eugene, and Minneapolis as the study sites.

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[1] See Goodlad and Klein, 1974.

This selection process resulted in sites that were diversified on several counts. Two were federally funded (Alum Rock, Minneapolis), two were locally funded (Eugene, Cincinnati). Two had desegregation as a goal (Cincinnati, Minneapolis); two did not (Alum Rock, Eugene). Two were moderately large urban districts (Cincinnati, Minneapolis); two were smaller districts (Alum Rock, Eugene). One district had almost no minority students (Eugene); one had almost no Anglo students (Alum Rock).

PROGRAM SELECTION

We developed some general criteria for identifying the kinds of alternative programs we wanted to study. Our goal was to operationalize the criteria enough to clearly and consistently apply them, without imposing a hard and fast set of rules on the participating districts. Thus, we chose the following characteristics:

- Programs that were officially designated as alternatives;
- Programs that were perceived as alternatives by the teachers, parents, and students who participated in them;
- Programs in which students enrolled by choice, not by assignments, referral, or default;
- Programs with broad eligibility requirements;
- Programs with distinctive curricula;
- Full-day rather than part-day programs.

In looking for districts to study, we selected a set of districts whose "alternative" programs met these criteria better than others, and made our final choices from that set. In each of the four districts we studied, it was our judgment that some programs met these criteria better than others. However, we generally accepted our host districts' designations. The exceptions illustrate how we used the criteria to make decisions in marginal cases.

Alum Rock

From 1972-73 through 1975-76, Alum Rock's designated "alternative" programs were those participating in the federally funded voucher demonstration. In 1976-77 and 1977-78, the district chose to deemphasize the differences between voucher and nonvoucher schools by allowing all schools to decide whether they wanted to offer one, two, or three educational programs, and by calling all schools alternatives.

Rand considered alternative programs as those that were organized as schools-within-schools. Although the district's open enrollment policy made it possible for students to apply to any school or program in the district, most of the single-program schools served mainly as neighborhood schools, and few attempted to develop distinctive program themes. Moreoever, only 25 percent of the teachers in the single-program schools said "Yes" when asked if they were teaching in an alternative program. Thus, the single-program schools clearly met only three of our six criteria.

Cincinnati

Cincinnati operates several Reading Centers, which are full-time programs for students with serious reading problems. Cincinnati designated these programs as alternatives in 1975-76 and 1976-77, then withdrew this designation in 1977-78. We concur with Cincinnati's later decision, because admission to the programs is primarily by referral and is restricted to students with specific reading problems. This policy is contrary to our criteria that program admissions should be primarily by choice and that programs should have broad eligibility requirements.

Minneapolis

In 1973, Minneapolis declared its intention to implement a citywide program for educational choices at grades K through 6, and by 1976-77 all schools in Minneapolis did have a program designation. However, we questioned whether all schools were actually functioning as alternatives. Many of the "contemporary" schools apparently served only as neighborhood schools (enrollment to default), and several of the schools labeled as "contemporary" apparently did not perceive themselves to be alternatives. We considered as alternatives only those contemporary schools that were actually clustered with other types of schools and whose staffs perceived the school as alternative.

DATA COLLECTION

Two Rand researchers spent at least two weeks in each district, and interviewed board members, district administrators, principals, teachers, parents, newspaper reporters, and knowledgeable community members. In addition, we conducted a questionnaire survey of teachers in three of the four districts (Cincinnati agreed to our fieldwork but did not want to impose a major survey on its teachers). The following sections describe in greater detail the data we collected in each district.

Alum Rock

Rand's most extensive data collection was in Alum Rock. From September 1972 through August 1976, Rand had a site office in San Jose, California, with as many as four staff members whose job was to observe the implementation of the voucher demonstration. Extensive field and interview notes were completed and sent to Rand's main offices in Santa Monica. Of particular relevance for this report is a set of structured interviews of 24 mini-schools that were conducted in the spring of 1975. These interviews explored a variety of effects of the demonstration on school and program-level decisionmaking.

In addition to on-site observation, questionnaire surveys of the entire teacher population were administered in the fall of 1972 and in the spring of 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1977. A telephone survey (25-percent sampling rate) was also conducted in the winter of 1974 to validate teachers' responses to our paper-and-pencil questionnaires. A summary of the response rates for various surveys is shown in Table A.1.

Cincinnati

Rand staff visited Cincinnati five times between February 1976 and March 1977. In that period, we interviewed all seven board members, 19 district-level personnel, two teacher association

Table A.1

SUMMARY OF RESPONSE RATES FOR ALUM ROCK TEACHER SURVEYS

Survey Date	Teacher Group	Forms Sent	Forms Returned	Response Rate (%)
Fall 1972	Voucher teachers	146	111	76
	Nonvoucher teachers	493	292	59
	All teachers	639	403	63
Spring 1973	Voucher teachers	158	116	73
	Nonvoucher teachers	499	301	60
	All teachers	657	417	63
Winter 1974[a]	Voucher teachers	84	84	100
	Nonvoucher teachers	71	67	94
	All teachers	155	151	97
Spring 1974	Voucher teachers	154	116	75
	Nonvoucher teachers	472	325	69
	All teachers	626	441	70
Spring 1975	Voucher teachers	364	324	89
	Nonvoucher teachers	230	192	84
	All teachers	594	516	87
Spring 1976	Voucher teachers	334	295	88
	Nonvoucher teachers	223	186	83
	All teachers	557	481	86
Spring 1977	Voucher teachers[b]	294	272	93
	Nonvoucher teachers[c]	220	210	95
	All teachers	514	482	94

[a] This was a telephone survey of a 25-percent sample of teachers.

[b] Teachers in former voucher schools.

[c] Teachers in former nonvoucher schools.

representatives, and seven outside observers of the district. We visited 11 alternative programs at 16 sites, and interviewed the principal and usually one or more teachers. We also interviewed ten parents who were actively involved with alternative schools.

Cincinnati did not wish to be included in Rand's Spring 1977 teacher survey, because the district felt it already had adequate survey data from its teachers. Rand used the results from several Cincinnati teacher surveys, and some of the data are presented in this report. Because the data are not the same as Rand's teacher survey data from Eugene, Minneapolis, and Alum Rock, our ability to make comparisons that included Cincinnati teachers was substantially reduced.

Eugene

Rand staff visited Eugene four times between January 1976 and February 1977. We interviewed three board members, 20 district-level personnel, a teacher union representative, and two interested observers of the district. We also visited each of the seven elementary alternative school sites, plus principals or teachers at 13 other schools in the district.

Rand surveyed all the full-time teachers in 15 of the district's 31 elementary schools. The sample included the seven elementary schools that housed alternative programs, plus two nonalternative schools in each of the district's four administrative areas. All full-time teachers were surveyed.

Teachers at one school refused to participate in the survey. At another school the response rate was less than 50 percent. Response rates at the other 13 schools varied from 64 percent to 100 percent, with a 70-percent overall return rate (see Table A.2).

The differential sampling rate for teachers in single-program and multiprogram schools (8/24 of the single-program schools and 6/7 of the multiprogram schools participated in the survey) made it necessary to weight teachers' responses in calculating the opinions of teachers from both types of schools. The weights were calculated as follows:

Table A.2

RESPONSE RATES FOR RAND'S SPRING 1977 TEACHER SURVEY IN EUGENE

Teacher Group	Forms Sent	Forms Returned	Response Rate (%)
Alternative teachers:			
Adams (Traditional)	4	3	75
Condon (Magnet Arts)	6	6	100
Edgewood (Evergreen)	3	--	--
Edison (Eastside)	5	4	80
Patterson (Primary)	5	5	100
River Road (Environmental)	2	2	100
Silver Lea (Corridor)	5	4	80
Subtotal	30	24	80
Nonalternative teachers in multiprogram schools:			
Adams	14	10	71
Condon	8	7	88
Edgewood	19	--	--
Edison	11	8	73
Patterson	7	5	71
River Road	25	19	76
Silver Lea	14	9	64
Subtotal	98	58	59
Nonalternative teachers in single-program schools:			
Awbrey Park	30	22	73
Coburg	10	9	90
Crest Drive	13	7	65
Dunn	14	14	100
Lincoln	11	3	27
Santa Clara	22	18	82
Westmoreland	22	18	82
Willakenzie	13	10	77
Subtotal	135	101	75
Grand Total	263	183	70

n_1 = number of questionnaires returned by teachers in single-program schools (n_1 = 101)

n_2 = number of questionnaires returned by teachers in multi-program schools (n_2 = 82)

w_1 = weight for single-program schools

w_2 = weight for multiprogram schools

$$\frac{w_1}{w_2} = \frac{24/8}{7/6} = 2.57$$

$$w_1 \times n_1 + w_2 \times n_2 = n_1 + n_2 = 183$$

$$w_1 = 1.377$$

$$w_2 = 0.536$$

Thus, teachers in single-program schools are given almost three times as much weight as teachers in multiprogram schools because proportionately fewer single-program schools were included in the survey.

Minneapolis

Rand staff visited Minneapolis for a week in November 1976 and another week in March 1977. We interviewed one board member, 14 district-level personnel, and staff at 12 schools.

Rand surveyed all full-time teachers in 22 of the district's 60 elementary schools. The schools included four of the district's nine contemporary schools, five of seven multiprogram schools, six of eleven continuous progress schools, five of six open schools, and two of 27 nonparticipating schools.[2]

Teachers at four schools declined to participate in the survey. At two other schools, the response rate was less than 50 percent. Response rates at the other 16 schools varied from 53 percent to 100 percent, with a 71-percent overall response rate (see Table A.3).

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[2] The initial sampling design did not differentiate between contemporary and nonparticipating schools but drew primarily from the contemporary group, with the result that the nonparticipating schools are seriously underrepresented in the sample.

Table A.3

RESPONSE RATES FOR RAND'S SPRING 1977 TEACHER SURVEY IN MINNEAPOLIS

Type of School	School Name	Forms Sent	Forms Returned	Response Rate (%)
Contemporary	Andersen A	22	14	64
	Hall	8	3	38
	Kenwood	19	12	63
	Tuttle	14	14	100
Subtotal		63	43	68
Continuous progress	Andersen B	22	18	82
	Field	26	21	81
	Hale	28	28	100
	Pratt	12	9	75
Subtotal		88	76	86
Open	Andersen C	16	15	94
	Harrison	19	10	53
	Holland	14	14	100
	Marcy	13	10	77
	Northrop	14	10	71
Subtotal		76	59	78
Multiprogram	Bancroft	25	16	64
	Standish	16	10	62
	Willard	21	12	57
Subtotal		62	38	61
Nonparticipating	Armitage	16	9	56
	Lincoln	23	9	39
Subtotal		39	18	46
Grand Total		328	234	71

The differential sampling rates for contemporary, continuous progress, open, and multiprogram schools made it necessary to weight teachers' responses in calculating the opinions of teachers from all types of schools. The weights were calculated as follows:

n_1 = number of questionnaires returned by teachers in contemporary schools ($n_1 = 43$)

n_2 = number of questionnaires returned by teachers in continuous progress schools ($n_2 = 76$)

n_3 = number of questionnaires returned by teachers in open schools ($n_3 = 59$)

n_4 = number of questionnaires returned by teachers in multiprogram schools ($n_4 = 38$)

w_1 = weight for contemporary schools

w_2 = weight for continuous progress schools

w_3 = weight for open schools

w_4 = weight for multiprogram schools

$$\frac{w_1}{w_2} = \frac{9/4}{11/4} = 0.818$$

$$\frac{w_1}{w_3} = \frac{9/4}{6/5} = 1.875$$

$$\frac{w_1}{w_4} = \frac{9/4}{7/3} = 0.964$$

$$w_1 \times n_1 + w_2 \times n_2 + w_3 \times n_3 + w_4 \times n_4 = n_1 + n_2 + n_3 + n_4 = 216$$

$w_1 = 1.045$

$w_2 = 1.278$

$w_3 = 0.557$

$w_4 = 1.084$

Thus, teachers in continuous progress schools are given the greatest weight because proportionately fewer of their schools were included in the survey, while teachers in open schools are given the least weight because proportionately more of their schools were included in the survey.

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